

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or **AWAKENED INDIA**

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



June 2016

Vol. 121, No. 6

₹ 10.00

THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *Uniqueness of Vedanta*

This Vedanta philosophy has certain peculiarities. In the first place, it is perfectly impersonal; it does not owe its origin to any person or prophet: it does not build itself around one man as a centre. Yet it has nothing to say against philosophies which do build themselves around certain persons. In later days in India, other philosophies and systems arose, built around certain persons—such as Buddhism, or many of our present sects. They each have a certain leader to whom they owe allegiance, just as the Christians and Mohammedans have. But the Vedanta philosophy stands at the background of all these various sects, and there is no fight and no antagonism between the Vedanta and any other system in the world. One principle the Vedanta claims to be found in every religion in the world—that man is divine, that all this which we see around us is the outcome of that consciousness of the divine. Everything that is strong, and good, and powerful in human nature is the outcome of that divinity, and though potential in many, there is no difference between man and man essentially, all being alike divine. There is, as it were, an infinite ocean behind, and you and I are so many waves, coming out of that infinite ocean; and each one of us is trying his best to manifest that infinite outside. So potentially each one of us has that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss as our birthright, our real nature; and the difference between us



is caused by the greater or lesser power to manifest that divine. Therefore the Vedanta lays down that each man should be treated not as what he manifests, but as what he stands for. Each human being stands for the divine, and therefore, every teacher should be helpful, not by condemning man, but by helping him to call forth the divinity that is within him. It also teaches that all the vast mass of energy that we see displayed in society and in every plane of action is really from inside out; and therefore what is called inspiration by other sects, the Vedantist begs the liberty to call the expiration of man. At the same time it does not quarrel with other sects; the Vedanta has no quarrel with those who do not understand this divinity of man. Consciously or unconsciously, every man is trying to unfold that divinity. Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and that spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena that we see are the result of this trying to unfold.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013), 1.398-99.

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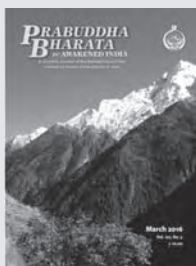
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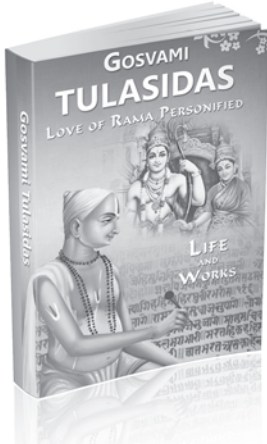


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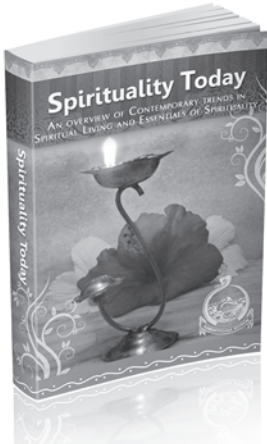
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What is spirituality? As in case of other fields of life, there are authentic and not-so-authentic examples and thoughts about spirituality too. Much needs to be clarified and understood about the true nature of spiritual life, its practices and obstacles. Swami Vivekananda called spirituality as the 'science of spirit'. This book discusses and illustrates the truth about spiritual living through writings by eminent monks and others.

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The Universal Temple of Bhagwan Shri Ramakrishna (Under Construction) An earnest Appeal for generous donations

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please accept our greetings and best wishes.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Aurangabad located on Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass) is a branch center affiliated to Headquarters, Belur Math (near Kolkata). This ashrama is conducting various service activities in the field of health, education, child welfare, as well as spreading spiritual message of eternal religion as propounded by Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

This ashrama has taken up a new project of erecting a temple of Shri Ramakrishna. The work was commenced in December 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. The day of inauguration has been fixed tentatively as 13th November 2016, Sunday.

The temple will be a unique and imposing monumental structure of its kind in entire Marathwada region in general and Aurangabad city in particular. It will add a cultural and spiritual dimension to the historical city of Aurangabad. It will be a great attraction and a place for worship, prayer, meditation and inspiration for the local people. It is also expected that the good number of general public visiting Aurangabad city as tourists for visiting world heritage sites such as Ellora & Ajanta and pilgrims for visiting Ghrishneshwar Jyotirling, Shirdi, Paithan etc. will include visit to the temple in their itinerary. It is aimed for the benefit of one and all without distinction of caste, creed, and nationality.

The estimated cost of the entire project is Rs. 15 Crores. So far Rs. 11.00 Crores have been spent through public contribution. The balance amount of Rs. 04.00 Crores is needed to complete the construction of the Temple.

We earnestly appeal to you to donate generously for this noble cause. Your support will indeed go a long way in our endeavor to erect this magnificent architectural edifice in the memory of Shri Ramakrishna who was the unique harmonizer of all the religions of the world and who dedicated his life to bring peace and welfare of mankind.

We value your help and co-operation immensely.

Yours in the service of the Lord,

Vishnupadananda

(Swami Vishnupadananda)
Secretary

Proposed Universal Temple of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna



Model of the Proposed New Temple

Temple Dimensions

Length: 156 ft. Breadth: 076 ft. Height: 100 ft.

Temple Construction Area : 18000 Sq.ft.

Garbhagriha : 24ft. x 24ft.

Temple Hall for Prayer and Meditation

70ft. x 40ft. Seating Capacity - 450

Auditorium (Ground Floor)

80ft. x 57ft. Seating Capacity - 500

The entire Temple will be built in Chunar sandstone
and interior in Ambaji and Makarana marble.

Ceiling of the Temple Hall will be done in Teak Wood

Estimated Cost : Rs. 15 Crores

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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Maitrayaniya Upanishad

June 2016
Vol. 121, No. 6

मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्

ते ह खलु वावोर्ध्वरितसोऽतिविस्मिता अभिसमेत्योचुर्भगवन्नमस्तेऽस्त्वनुशाधि त्वमस्माकं गतिरन्या न विद्यत इति । अस्य को विधिर्भूतात्मनो येनेदं हित्वात्मन्नेव सायुज्यमुपैति तान् होवाचेति ॥४.१॥

Te ha khalu vavordhva-retaso'tivismita abhisametyochur-bhagavannamaste'stvanushadhi tvam-asmakam gati-r-anya na vidyata iti. Asya ko vidhir-bhutatmano yenedam hitvatmanneva sayujyam-upaiti tan hovacheti. (4.1)

The Valikhilyas, indeed, of great chastity, exceedingly surprised, approached him and said: 'Revered Sir, salutations to you, instruct us further. You are our only way to liberation, we have no other way. What is the method by which this elemental self, after leaving this elemental body, unites with the true Self?' Then he told them. (4.1)

THIS MONTH

WORDS ACQUIRE MEANINGS, explicit and implicit, based on the mood and the circumstance of their utterance. Same words can mean completely different things with a change in the context. The different ways in which meanings of words are construed are discussed in **Meanings and Contexts**.

One of the many wonders brought about by technology in general and the Internet in particular is the ease with which historical documents can be accessed and searched. And this is a great joy to ardent students of the life of Swami Vivekananda as new materials continue to come from unexpected sources. Diane Marshall, graphic artist and art historian from Independence, Missouri, USA, who had last year discovered an unpublished lecture of Swamiji delivered in Sterling, has discovered yet another unpublished lecture of Swamiji delivered in Washington D C in 1894. Newspaper reports also reveal some travel details of Swamiji that were hitherto unknown. These accounts are given in **Unpublished Lecture of Swami Vivekananda in Washington**.

The importance of studying literature has been analysed in **Claiming the Domain of the Literary: Mourning the Death of Reading Fiction** by Subhasis Chattopadhyay, a practising psychoanalyst and Assistant Professor of English, Ramananda College, Bishnupur.

The unreality of the waking state with numerous parallels from modern physics is shown in the fifth instalment of the edited transcript of a series of lectures on **Mandukya Upanishad**

given by Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, who was the thirteenth president of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, has been asked various questions regarding various aspects of spiritual life by the young and old alike, over a period of time. The second instalment of the collection of such questions and his answers to them is given in **Vedanta Answers**.

All activities should be done with a devotional attitude by spiritual aspirants. This helps one to develop the attitude of surrender to God at all times. This is explained in the fifth instalment of Swami Omkareshwarananda's recounting of **Swami Premananda's Teachings**. This has been translated from the Bengali book *Premananda*.

Interior conflicts and dissociations are discussed in the fourth instalment of **The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life** by Swami Nityasthananda, acharya at the Probationers' Training Centre, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

The concluding instalment of **The Midnight Vedantic Roar** emphasises the importance of our thoughts while dying. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

Seana Valentine Shiffrin, Professor of philosophy and the Pete Kameron Professor of law and social justice at the University of California, Los Angeles writes on **Speech Matters**. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.

Meanings and Contexts

WORDS ARE THE MEDIUM of human verbal communication. They are complemented by non-verbal communication like gestures, facial expressions, and different kinds of sounds conveying different moods. A grunt can never be adequately translated into a word. Even the word 'grunt' does not come close to the corresponding sound. Then there are pictures and symbols, the proverbial equivalents of thousands of words. Nonetheless, words occupy the maximum communication space of humans. Hence it is imperative that we understand the power and nuances of word-play. It is necessary for us to effectively use words to create understanding between human beings.

Words have many meanings. Every word has numerous etymological meanings. It is no less a feat to understand the correct meaning of a given word as intended by the speaker. A speaker uses a particular word with a particular meaning. A series of many such words are used. Each word is spoken with a particular meaning chosen from many meanings of the same word. It is a miracle that the listener understands all the words in exactly the same meaning in which they are used by the speaker. This may not seem as something extraordinary to us. However, this is no simple task. The complexity of this process of dynamically choosing word-meanings both by the speaker and the listener in the everyday act of speaking is not understood fully till one attempts to replicate these actions through a machine. It is when one tries to use artificial intelligence to get a robot do this simple human task that one gets

a glimpse of its miraculous nature. Neurological disorders or illnesses that take away the ability to choose proper words and synchronise them

While meanings could be 'mean', we constantly 'con' texts to arrive at different contexts.

into sentences also set us thinking about the fine and elaborate mechanism of speech. One starts wondering if there is something more to speech than just words, meanings, and contexts. There appears to be an inexplicable something that enables one to go for the appropriate words and phrases and weave them into a cogent combination. Language is an elusive search for meaning through words and phrases. If language were truly meaningful there would be no misunderstanding. True meaning eludes language.


Speech becomes more complex when one takes into account the play on meanings that is made not just by writers and poets but even a casual chit-chat. Pun is a manner of speech that is used more in humour but also to pack more meanings into a word. A pun is lost if the listener is unable to catch the wordplay. This again brings to light the importance of synchronicity between the speaker and listener in speech. But then, meanings and contexts are not restricted to verbal communication alone. Any kind of communication relies on meanings and contexts. The meaning intended by the speaker should be the meaning that is understood by the listener. Even a different shade of meaning can create

much misunderstanding. While much fuss is made about how people should try to understand one another and such ability is considered to be an important step in interpersonal relations, it could be that not understanding other people is more of an organic problem than mental or psychological. A less developed brain or less developed neural speech circuits may cause regular misunderstanding or the missing of the subtle nuances of language. We should focus as much on developing this ability of our brain as we concentrate on interpersonal skills at the psychological level.

No word has a meaning that is independent of its context. In a sarcastic context, a word of love could only symbolise hate or abhorrence. Derisive comments become loving appellations in the context of love. Any communication, verbal or otherwise, has the speaker, listener, time, place, mood, and immediate past events as contexts. The relation between the speaker and the listener is vital in determining or understanding the context. If the speaker is senior in any respect, including age, to the listener, then the context becomes more favourable to the speaker. How often do we give importance to a child's prattle? Also, when a police officer is the speaker, you better listen! Oftentimes, it is the context that determines the result of the conversation or the fact whether it would turn out to be a conversation or a monologue. In contexts of chastisement or disciplining, the listener can hardly speak.

Contrary though it may seem, we can understand verbal contexts better only if we can understand the non-verbal ones. If one cannot read into a smirk or a grimace, one cannot also understand fully the complete meaning and significance of a word of contempt. Meanings and contexts determine the extent of our understanding of our surroundings as also of ourselves. They also determine the limits of our understanding through

communication. Every word acquires a different meaning and continues to develop newer shades of meaning depending upon its contextualisation. While meanings could be 'mean', we constantly 'con' texts to arrive at different contexts. A word is ripped out of its original significance and a new drape of meaning is put around it to the extent that in due course it loses any connection with its original intention. Swear words or slang words are a case in point. Modern language has many swear words as colophons, albeit not at all in their etymological sense.

The problem of meanings and contexts is not just a problem of communication. It is also a problem of the deeper and more urgent need for understanding the meaning of our lives and our contexts in this universe. How much do we understand when we say that we understand? Are we not going into deeper recesses of misunderstanding when we don the robe of understanding? Are we not putting layers and layers of wrong meanings on the true meaning that is our true Self? Are we not going round and round in circles instead of hitting on the point in the middle? If the purpose of communication was true understanding, why is it that we are yet to arrive at a plausible one despite our apparent achievements or progress? It all boils down to the wrong context or paradigm. Our contexts have to change. The way we look at things and beings has to change. Our quest for understanding diversity should change. We should aim to converge at the centre of the centrifuge that is this universe. Enough has been said. Enough has been written. Enough has been implied. It is time already that we try to see beyond speech, writing, and implication. It is time that we find the meaning of meanings. It is time that we put context in context. It is time we search for that which has been tried unsuccessfully to be contextualised. It is time we find meaning to our being. 

Unpublished Lecture of Swami Vivekananda in Washington D C

Diane Marshall

THE SUNDAY EDITION OF THE *Washington Times* of 9 December 1894 holds a few surprises for Swami Vivekananda history buffs. Apparently Swamiji made another visit to Washington D C which has not—to my knowledge—previously been recorded in his main biographical works. His first visit to the District of Columbia was interlaced with a journey to Baltimore, Maryland. Swamiji went to Baltimore on 12 October and lectured there on the 14th with the Vrooman brothers at Albaugh's Lyceum Theatre. According to the *Washington Times* he came to the national capital on 16 October.¹ He returned to Baltimore for a second lecture at the Lyceum on the 21st. He spoke in Washington twice at the People's Church on 28 October and at Metzerott Music Hall on 1 November. The next day he returned to Baltimore to speak at Harris Academy of Music. He was scheduled to lecture again at Metzerott's in Washington on Tuesday, 6 November. This last lecture was apparently cancelled.

The 'Fin de Siècle Femininity' column of the *Washington Times* was dedicated to news about the many women's organisations in the city. At the end of the 9 December column was a brief report on the previous meeting of the Twentieth Century Club:

Vive Kananda's lecture in the Unitarian Church

Twentieth Century Club met in the lecture room of the Unitarian church, corner of Fourteenth and L Streets, to hear the East Indian White Mahatma, Vive Kananda.

The room was packed to its utmost capacity, and the lecturer declared that never before had he spoken to a more intellectual and sympathetic audience. The subjects of his discourse were psychology, astrology and the occult sciences.

He spoke of the status of woman in India, and of the school system, saying that if the Empress of India would establish the public school system according to the ideas of Prof. Harris, and would send missionaries to teach of the new things of the nineteenth century, the people of India would be far better satisfied.

He spoke of the subjugation of mind over body and presented the soul in a light new to many in the audience.

Mr. Kananda speaks English fluently and was listened to with interest and profound attention throughout the lecture.

On the conclusion of the discourse the ladies plied the lecturer with questions which he answered to their evident satisfaction.

Luncheon was then served and partaken of by the assembled members and guests.²

No date was given for this lecture. Presumably the society column was intended to cover the previous week's events. The Twentieth Century Club met regularly on a monthly basis, usually on Thursday mornings, but there may have been alterations to their schedule.³ The club's first meeting of the season was reported on 4 November, when officer elections were held. There was no mention of the Twentieth Century Club in

the 'Fin de Siècle Femininity' columns on 11, 18, 25 November or 2 December. Thursday, 29 November was a holiday, President Cleveland having proclaimed it as Thanksgiving Day. So it seems unlikely that the club had a newsworthy guest in November. The preceding Sunday, 2 December, can be ruled out because a luncheon meeting would have conflicted with church services. By Thursday, 6 December, Swamiji was in Massachusetts participating in Sara Bull's fêted Cambridge Talks.⁴ This points to the probability that the club met either on 3, 4, or 5 December. For now, it may be deduced that Swamiji was in Washington D C for part of the first week of December.

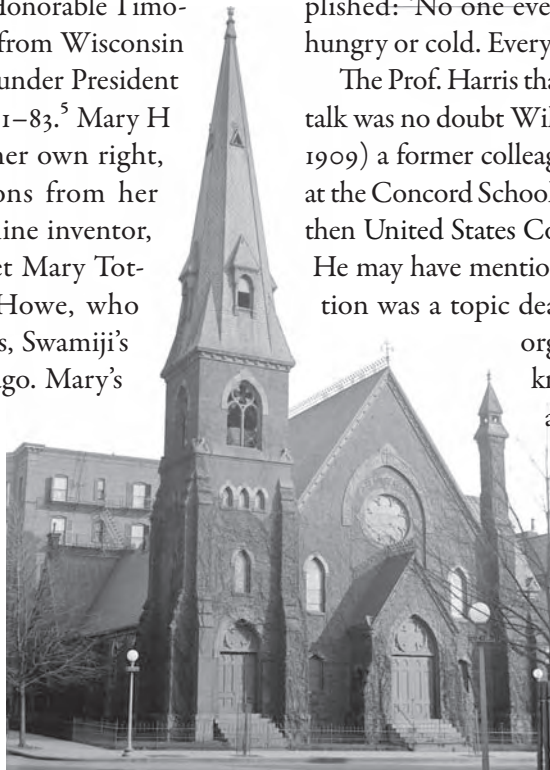
The president of the Twentieth Century Club was Mrs Enoch Totten, who had been Swamiji's host during his previous visit in Washington. Mary Elizabeth Howe Totten was quite experienced in the Washington political world. Her father had been the Honorable Timothy Otis Howe, Senator from Wisconsin and Postmaster General under President Chester Arthur from 1881–83.⁵ Mary H Totten was wealthy in her own right, having inherited millions from her cousin, the sewing machine inventor, Elias Howe. Swamiji met Mary Totten through Grace T Howe, who was a friend of the Hales, Swamiji's adopted family in Chicago. Mary's father and Grace's brother were railroad attorneys, as was her husband, Enoch, a lawyer for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.⁶

All Souls Church, Unitarian was established in 1821 and is still a very active congregation in

Washington. The church is no longer at Fourteenth and L Streets, near Thomas Circle. In 1923 a new church was built at Sixteenth and Harvard Streets. President William Howard Taft worshipped at All Souls at the Fourteenth and L Street location, as did Frederick Douglas. All Souls Unitarian had been committed to the abolition of slavery, but Swamiji spoke in the post-war church, built in 1877. On the wall above the pulpit was inscribed: 'This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' In 1894 the minister was Rev. Dr Rush R Shippen. Shippen had held Unitarian pastorates in Chicago and Massachusetts before coming to Washington in 1881.⁷ The Twentieth Century Club was deemed a notable educational organisation within the church. The *Times* commented that Shippen was a very popular pastor and a great deal of charitable work was accomplished: 'No one ever leaves the church doors hungry or cold. Everyone is made welcome.'

The Prof. Harris that Swamiji referred to in his talk was no doubt William Torrey Harris (1864–1909) a former colleague of Franklin B Sanborn at the Concord School of Philosophy.⁸ Harris was then United States Commissioner of Education.

He may have mentioned Harris because education was a topic dear to progressive women's organisations, or perhaps he knew of him through mutual acquaintances such as Sanborn and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The possibility also exists that Swamiji may have met Harris in Washington. Either way, the reporter picked up on a name that was familiar to him. Philosophically, Harris was devoted



All Souls Unitarian Church, Washington D C

to Hegel, which could be why Swamiji found his ideas attractive. However, had he known that Harris was responsible for removing Native American children from their families to boarding schools where they were inculcated with Christianity and taught to deny their Indian culture, he surely would have withdrawn his endorsement.⁹

The weirdest aspect of the *Washington Times* brief summary of Swamiji's talk was his appellation as a 'White Mahatma'. Did the reporter misidentify him as a Theosophist? The Theosophical Society was quite active in D C at the time. News articles about Theosophy and Madame Blavatsky's mahatmas were then current in the newspapers, but none of these mahatmas were distinctly identified as 'White'. Searching for a more precise social context for 'White Mahatma' in 1894, it soon became clear that in this case whiteness did not symbolise purity or holiness—it meant skin colour. This idea is even odder—that Swamiji was seen simultaneously as East Indian and as white—those lines were scarcely blurred in 1894. Rather, the reporter was instead using the latest buzzword to portray Swamiji. 'White Mahatma' was an epithet claimed by one Prof. Samri Baldwin, a magician. This seems an undeserved comparison. Clearly, Swamiji never represented himself as a magician, so why the confusion?

The *Washington Times* reporter's comment that Swamiji 'speaks English fluently' is a clue that he was seeing him for the first time, and therefore was unfamiliar with his religious vocation. I wonder if someone had briefed the reporter by showing him a recent clipping from the *Washington Post* of an article about the swami entitled 'Only a Hindoo Monk', and subtitled 'Vive Kananda Believes Not in the Tricks of the Yogis'. Here are some pertinent extracts from that interview which began:

A Hindoo who is a member of no religious sect, who claims no knowledge or powers of

occultism, who is not a believer in the miracles of the yogis, who never saw the Deliah [*sic*] Lama, and who does not think any more of him or of the other wonder workers of India than he does of the Christian missionaries who are working on the outskirts of the masses there, but who simply announces himself as a religious student and a teacher to the world at large, is something of a rarity.

... 'I claim no affiliation with any religious sect, but occupy the position of an observer, and so far as I may, of a teacher to mankind.' ... 'About the higher mysteries of life and existence I can do no more than speculate, as others do.' ... 'I am not a believer in miracles—they are repugnant to me in matters of religion.'

The interview continued under the last subtitle, 'The Yogis Are Jugglers':

When asked whether he knew anything of the alleged miraculous performances of the yogis and adepts Mr. Kananda replied that he was not interested in miracles, and that while there were of course a great many clever jugglers in the country, their performances were tricks. Mr. Kananda said that he had seen the mango trick but once, and then by a fakir on a small scale.

Rev. Bush R Shippen



He held the same view about the alleged attainments of the lamas. 'There is a great lack of trained, scientific, and unprejudiced observers in all accounts of these phenomena,' said he, 'so that it is hard to select the false from the true.'¹⁰

Swamiji's eminent historian, Marie Louise Burke, considered the *Post* interview more satisfactory than most. Unfortunately, in the larger context of events in Washington that season, Swamiji's disclaimers of miracle mongering, which were honestly sceptical and genuine, may have worked against him. Disclaiming the miraculous happened to be the stock-in-trade of Baldwin aka the White Mahatma. Baldwin was a self-styled 'honest liar'. His game was to debunk magic tricks while entertaining audiences with the performance of magic. People loved it. They completely accepted being told that they were going to be deceived, but that it was all in the interest of truth, and they paid gladly for the privilege.

Baldwin had given several performances at Metzerott Hall in Washington only a few days prior to Swamiji's talk at All Souls Unitarian, so the term 'White Mahatma' was still a catchphrase. On 27 November the *Washington Times* printed:

A large audience, containing a number of believers in spiritualism and Himalayan Mahatmas, witnessed the performance of Prof. Samri and Mrs. Kitty Baldwin, advertised as the White Mahatmas, at Metzerott Hall last night.

The first trick was one introducing 'somatic indigitation and asometous sejunction', or, in plain English, the exposure of the cabinet trick. It was well done. A mind-reading exhibition by the professor's wife followed and was a novelty in its way. Other features of the programme were Miss Kate Russell, in quaint mimicry; and an amusing comedietta, 'A Pair of Plotters'; Señor Manuel Lopez's fine performance on the bandurria or eight-stringed mandolin, concluding with Mrs. Baldwin's intuitive intimations and dream description. Prof. Baldwin

will amuse the public every night this week and at a Thanksgiving matinee.

Why waste time on the dubious 'Prof.' Baldwin? Obviously he does not belong in the same class or even on the same page as Swamiji. Although we can readily distinguish Swamiji from his ilk, it is important to understand how characters like Baldwin swayed the public, and how Swamiji consequently had to contend with outlandish expectations. Baldwin manipulated the general public's fascination with the bizarre into a lowbrow hegemony of Asian cultures. Baldwin purported to explain the mysteries of the Orient, while compounding the ignorance of the Occident. He posed as an educator who mastered and exposed the tricks of other tricksters, and usually the defeated magicians were Asian stereotypes.

And what is a Mahatma? Prof. Baldwin explains it etymologically as meaning 'a great soul'. In its technical sense in India and Thibet it designates a person who can do wonderful things that border upon the supernatural, and who is looked upon as an expert or adept in the occult sciences. It is not an official title, but is bestowed by general acclaim. In this a Mahatma differs from a Yogi, who is a priest by profession. A fakir is a lower order of religious mendicants, who impose on the public by mere sleight of hand.

How did the Professor become a Mahatma? Starting in life as a public exposé of the frauds of spiritualism and the tricks of conjurers, he gradually became interested in mesmerism, hypnotism, telepathy and all kindred subjects. While he emphatically repudiates any belief in the supernatural, he yet holds that there are unseen forces in nature which can be utilized in a manner that seems supernatural to the vulgar, and are not within the mental powers of the race to explain on any known scientific basis.¹¹

Although Baldwin touted White Mahatma as an honorific title, he had little respect for so-called mahatmas—which he deemed a class of 'native mystery men'. In 1895 he self-published

a book, *Secrets of the Mahatmas Explained* containing this conversation:

‘But the Mahatmas, Professor—you spent some time amongst them investigating their mysteries?’

‘Yes; but I found their claims to be untenable. All the manifestations the Mahatmas produced can obtain by natural means, and that is how they obtain them—their claims to the contrary notwithstanding. And very clumsy some of their methods are. Did you ever see a Mahatma, by the way?’ And the Professor opened the big scrapbook at another page. ‘Here are photographs of a group of them. The upper lot, you will notice, wear great grotesque and ugly masks over their heads. Below, you see them with the masks removed.’

Mahatmas went down in my estimation with that revelation. The masks are startling from their hideousness; the faces are not striking, either for excessive ugliness to great intelligence.¹²

Baldwin had a genius for generating publicity. On 17 September 1894 the *New York Times* printed a story about Pastor Pilkinton, whose conservative congregation censured him for attending a performance of the White Mahatmas. The minister wrote a long letter in his own defence, praising Baldwin ‘in every sense a gentleman and a scholar and his wife a delightful Christian woman.’¹³ On 28 October Baldwin’s hat was shot off in a dark alley in Hartford, CT. This shooting was claimed to be a response from an alleged murderer, ‘Harry the Dodger’, revealed to Mrs Baldwin in a trance.¹⁴ Baldwin boasted about close escapes made after hoodwinking fanatics. He also boasted of valuable gifts bestowed from foreign potentates in appreciation for his cleverness. Baldwin openly admitted that he was a mere magician and that he felt justifiably obliged to expose the magic tricks of those who claimed their supernormal powers were real. However, he would tell journalists that his wife, Kitty, had a real gift for mind-reading that he

was unable to explain. For all his vaunted scepticism, he said he could not help but believe in her power of intuition when she was in a trance. What a clever and unassailable position! The magician encouraged other men to question and even to criticise him, but he requested respect for his wife. Who dared to argue that point!

The *Washington Post* reporter who had worked up the subhead of ‘Vive Kananda Believes Not in the Tricks of the Yogis’, seemed a bit disappointed when he duly noted that Swamiji’s talk at the People’s Church was ‘a regular sermon, dealing entirely with the spiritual side of religion’ and his informational ‘address in the afternoon was more in the form of a lecture on the Aryan race’. Upon examination it is clear that Swamiji’s disclaimer of magic tricks was just that—and therefore not the type of disclaimer that Baldwin deployed as a prospectus for entertainment. But how could someone skimming newspaper headlines distinguish ‘Vive Kananda Believes Not in the Tricks of the Yogis’, from ‘The White Mahatma, What Prof. Baldwin Discovered Concerning Eastern Magic’?

At the time, it was debatable whether the average American even cared to differentiate a real sadhu from an admittedly fake ‘Mahatma’. It was certainly difficult to sift genuine information about Hindu culture from spiritualist mystification. Swamiji himself said as much to the *Post* reporter: ‘it is hard to select the false from the true.’¹⁵ Although Swamiji generally attracted educated audiences, a fair portion were unacquainted with Asian religion and culture. The general newspaper readership were even less inclined to discriminate spirituality from spiritualism. Swamiji carefully steered clear of spiritualism. He illustrated his sermons with Ramakrishna’s parables, shining a fresh, clean light on perennial spiritual problems. These sensible metaphors and anecdotes did not strain credulity with echoing knocks and cryptic messages

from a spirit world. Even so, the *Post* reporter still seemed to be rooting for pagan blindness when he used the subhead: 'He Believes It Blindly.' Yet he quoted Swamiji being philosophically sceptical—if not agnostic—on the topic of rebirth: 'I must, however, believe in a past and a hereafter as necessary to the existence of the present. And if we go on from here, we must go in other forms, and so comes my belief in reincarnation. But I can prove nothing, and any one is welcome to deprive me of the theory of reincarnation provided they will show me something better to replace it. Only up to the present I have found nothing that offers so satisfactory an explanation to me' (ibid.).

Washington was awash in spiritualism in the autumn of 1894. There were plenty of ordinary, garden-variety spiritualists who practised in the city. The Theosophists were also well established there. On 14 September the *Washington Times* announced that Dr Heinrich Hensoldt, a former geology professor at Columbia University, was being sponsored by the Blavatsky branch of the Theosophical Society to lecture in the capital in appreciation for 'his personal knowledge of the Mahatmas and adepts of occult philosophy'.¹⁶ Hensoldt spoke at the Academy of Music on 14 and 21 October. There were also earnest, non-Orientalist speakers for whom spiritualism was a new gospel, such as Cora L Richmond of Chicago who lectured at Metzerott Hall on 21 and 28 October on 'The New Religion'. As if mere mahatmas were not enough, the greatest mystery creator of all time, the author Arthur Conan Doyle, lectured at Metzerott Hall on 5 November, the night before Swamiji was scheduled to talk there on 'God of All Nations'. On 7 November William Q Judge, the Theosophist who was embroiled in the London mahatma hoax controversy, spoke at Metzerott Hall.¹⁷

The Jain scholar, Virchand R Gandhi, whom

Swamiji had known at the Parliament of Religions, moved from New York to stay in Washington D C during November, December, and January for a long series of lectures. Gandhi was reckoned to be a good speaker by Americans. On matters concerning the welfare of India, many of his opinions concurred with Swamiji's. Gandhi seems to have had quite a different temperament from Swamiji, though. He strikes me as being more pedagogic, more methodical, more particular.¹⁸ He advertised his lectures with the titles of 'Spiritualism', 'Occult philosophy', and 'Esoteric science'. He spoke at Metzerott Hall, the People's Church, and the Theosophical Society. In Washington, Gandhi was a guest of Col. R E Whitman at 226 Fifth Street S E.¹⁹ Interestingly, in late December Gandhi also addressed the Twentieth Century Club. His topic was planetary influences, which he illustrated with chalk diagrams on the blackboard.²⁰ His course of lectures to the Twentieth Century Club was announced on 16 December in the *Washington Times*—just a week after the report of Swamiji's talk. Swamiji respected Gandhi. In November 1894 he wrote two letters to Haridas Viharidas Desai mentioning Gandhi, once praising him for his defence of his religion and his country. On 12 January 1895, Gandhi wrote an article for the *Washington Evening Star* in which he extolled the ideals of the Hindu sannyasin.²¹ Considering the coincidence of Gandhi and Swamiji in Washington at the same time, it is quite probable that Swamiji recommended Gandhi to Mary Totten and the Twentieth Century Club.

It is regrettable that there is not a more complete account of Swamiji's talk to the Twentieth Century Club. This *Washington Times* article may have been overlooked initially because it sounded as if it were about someone else, a mysterious mahatma who spoke about astrology and occult science. This was not Swamiji's



Rev. Alexander Kent

usual subject matter, and the digression may have been due to questions he had to field from his audience. When the report touches the topics of women's status, public schools, missionaries in India, control of the mind, and nature of the soul, then a glimpse of Swamiji shines through the journalist's minimal jotting.

A milieu of mystery swirled about fringe religious topics in the nation's capital in 1894. So much esoteric spiritualism obfuscated practical comprehension, and sometimes Swamiji's lecture titles suffered from typographical translation. The exotic topic of 'Reincarnation' was frequently requested, and he was accustomed to fulfilling that demand. I suspect that Swamiji did not see the advertisements announcing his appearance at Metzerott Hall. It seems only logical to suppose that the intended title of his 1 November lecture was 'Karma & Reincarnation'. Either due to the illegibility of Swamiji's handwriting or the handwriting of the person who submitted the advertisements to the newspaper, the ampersand between 'Karma & Reincarnation' morphed into 'Karmax!'. Reincarnation was

placed in parentheses in the printed advertisement, as if doing so defined the inscrutable 'Karmax!'. Beginning 26 October this advertisement ran seven times in the *Times* and was repeated four times in the *Evening Star* starting on 25 October. Apparently no one questioned 'Karmax!'.

Love was the subject of Swamiji's best talk in Washington. This sermon given at the People's Church, was headlined 'Love Religion's Essence'. It filled a column in the 29 October *Washington Times* and was reproduced in full by Asim Chaudhuri in *Swami Vivekananda in America, New Findings*.²² The talk was first announced in the *Washington Times* Sunday, 21 October 1894: 'Sreemat Vivekananda Swami, the missionary of the Hindu faith now in this country, was in the city Tuesday [16 October]. He will preach for Dr. Kent next Sunday [28 October].'²³ It was advertised again in the *Times* on 26 October.²⁴

Here is an extract from 'Love Religion's Essence':

Your own Paul says 'all else shall perish, but love abideth'. That is the great truth. That false doctrine that my nation shall be aggrandized at the cost of every other nation is not of God.

A youth went to his master and said, 'I want to know God'. The master paid little attention, but the youth persisted and would not be put off. Finally one day the master said: 'Let us go down to the river and have a bath'. So they went down and the youth plunged in. The master followed and falling upon him held him under. The youth struggled, but the master would not let him up. Finally, when he seemed to be almost dead he desisted, drew him from the water and revived him. 'What did you most want when in the water?' the master asked. 'Breath', was the answer. 'Then you don't want God.'

So it is with men, what do you want? You want breath, without it you cannot live; you want bread, without it you cannot live; you want a house, without it you cannot live. When you want God as you want these things, He manifests himself to you. It is a great thing to want God.

A majority of men and women in this world want the enjoyments of sense. They have been told that there is a God afar off and if they will send him a cartload of words he will help them get these good things of this world. But in every land there are a few persons who want God. They would be one with the essence of good and truth. Religion is not shopkeeping. Love asks no return; love begs not; love gives.

Religion is not an outgrowth of fear; religion is joyous. It is the spontaneous outburst of the songs of birds and the beautiful sight of the morning. It is an expression of the spirit. It is from within an expression of the free and noble spirit.

If misery is religion, what is hell? No man has a right to make himself miserable. To do so is a mistake; it is a sin. Every peal of laughter is a prayer sent to God.

To go back, what I have learned is this: Religion is not in books, not in forms, not in sects, not in nations; religion is in the human heart. It is engraved there. The proof of it is in ourselves.²⁵

Rev. Alexander Kent, the pastor of the People's Church, had visited the World's Fair in Chicago. Although it is uncertain if he attended the Parliament of Religions, he followed reports of its Asian delegates closely. Swamiji held instant name recognition for readers about the Parliament of Religions. The previous spring, Kent had witnessed the interest that Kinza R M Hirai's lectures generated in Washington, and he had invited him to speak at the People's Church.²⁶ Therefore Kent had only to hear of Swamiji's proximity in order to desire him as a speaker for his church. It is probable that Kent knew Hiram Vrooman either from his previously held pastorate in Baltimore or because of their shared political opinions. Kent kept on top of the news. No doubt he was notified of the Vrooman's 'Dynamic Religion' campaign in Baltimore. It is feasible that Kent saw Swamiji speak along with the Vroomans at the Lyceum Theatre in Baltimore on the evening of the 14th and was inspired by

Swamiji's dynamic stage presence. The *Baltimore Sun* said that he spoke 'with force and feeling'.²⁷ It is equally possible that Kent contacted Swamiji in Washington on the 16th after Hiram Vrooman spoke about Swamiji at his church's semi-annual conference at Metzertott Hall.²⁸ Either occasion would have allowed time—once Swamiji agreed to address the People's Church—to advertise the event as early as the 21st.

Whoever placed the announcement in the *Times* took pains to address Swamiji as 'Sreemat Vivekananda Swami', a unique instance of respect in American newspapers. Kent seemed to have had a very good relationship with the newspapers. His sermons—almost always on social justice issues—garnered considerable column space, sometimes on the front page. An article featuring Kent and his new People's Church appeared in the *Washington Times* on 28 October 1894. 'Christianity is socialistic', declared Kent in the first sentence.²⁹ I am sure the Vroomans would have whooped at that battle-cry.³⁰ Dr Kent had been a Universalist pastor in Washington for about thirteen years. He bravely began the non-sectarian People's Church in 1891. I imagine that its congregants were far humbler and probably more radical than the illustrious Washingtonians that filled the pews at All Souls. The People's Church met in the Typographical Temple, the printer's trade union building.³¹ It stood in the middle of the block on G Street NW directly across from the Pension Office, which still stands as a landmark to the Washington that Swamiji saw.

Of course Swamiji would have drawn an interesting mix of people to the People's Church. Perhaps their friendly faces inspired his sermon. A theory has been advanced that Enoch Totten introduced Swamiji to Kent. It seems more likely that the influence travelled the other direction. Swamiji would have been the magnet that brought Col. and Mrs Totten to the People's

Church possibly for the first time. Even though Totten was religiously liberal, he was a wealthy, company lawyer and probably not in the habit of listening to socialist rhetoric at a trade-union hall. Swamiji's lectures at the People's Church must have resulted in favourable feedback for Kent. He was invited to give the Thanksgiving message at All Souls Unitarian. Rev. Shippen was already acquainted with Rev. Kent; they were fellow members of the Society for Philosophical Inquiry.³²

Alexander Kent was certainly earnest, vocal, and broadminded. In an editorial for the *Washington Times* he boldly urged the wildly divergent conventions of Spiritualists of the United States and the Brotherhood of St Andrew to succeed on their respective paths.³³ As president of the Washington Psychical Research Society, he admitted that the craze for occultism often exceeded common sense.³⁴ For Kent, service to humankind was the apex of Christianity. In his own way he appreciated Swamiji's message about love of God—but he had to wrestle with it. In order to dive into Swamiji's mysticism, liberal Christians had to overcome a deep fear of perceived selfishness. The idea that the goal of prayer was to see God was novel to many service-oriented Christians. One of the personal stories in Swamiji's sermon was Sri Ramakrishna's testimony that he saw God. Apparently it made quite an impression on Kent, who tried to reconcile it within his own understanding. His concept of spirituality reveals itself as a social endeavour for collective goodness rather than as an individual's interior quest to find innate divinity. The following week, the *Washington Times* reported on Kent's sermon with the headline, 'Real goodness is divine'. Here follows pertinent excerpts of this article, which has not previously been reproduced in connection with Swamiji:

Rev. Alexander Kent Discourses on a Thought
Suggested by the Brahmin Monk—It Is

Common, He Says, to Theorize, but Few Live
Above the Common Level

'Seeing God' was the subject of the Rev. Alexander Kent in his morning sermon at the People's Church, No. 423 G street northwest, yesterday. It was suggested by the address of the Brahmin monk, Vive Kananda, the previous Sunday. There was a well-filled room for an audience.

Dr. Kent said Vive Kananda's experience had taught that both the Christian and the Hindoo preachers had departed from truth. Their apostasy had been first of life, then of doctrine.

So long as Christians made it their chief business to live as their master lived, to make the loving service of their fellowmen the main business and purpose of life, there was little tendency to apostasy in doctrine. ...

Nothing is more central in the Christ teaching than that God is spirit, not only omniscient, but omnipresent, and equally accessible to every truly worshipful and loving soul from every part of the wide universe.

The eye can see nothing of the infinite beauty that shines in the vesture of the infinite life, any more than the mirror can see the form that images in its seeming depths. The harmonies of the heavens are nothing to the outward ear. They address themselves to the soul, and if that soul is discordant or irresponsive, no harmonies are heard.

That love is the one abiding reality of the universe is what Vivekananda saw when he says he saw God. His words show us that occultism is becoming something of a fact in this country, just at a time apparently when it is most widely discredited in India and Japan by the most enlightened and progressive of their people. Kinza Hirai and Vivekananda both smile at the credulity which swallows all the wonder stories of that land while stumbling at the records of our gospels. ...

Out of the heart—not the head—are the issues of life. What we love, rather than what we think, determines the quality of our being.

Love will always control thought, but thought will not always awaken love. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Only the affections can transmute thought into life.³⁵

These two *Washington Times* articles, Swamiji's sermon at the People's Church on 28 October, and Kent's responding sermon on 5 November, serve as a timely gauge of Swamiji's influence upon liberal Christianity. He spoke directly to the heart, and this appeal went much deeper than mere fascination with his scarlet robe and golden turban. The idea that God could be seen, and that devout persons in other lands were seeing Him, was something of a revelation. Most Christians had heard 'Ask, and it shall be given you';³⁶ but that was tepid compared to Swamiji's dramatic picture of a gasping desire for God-vision. On 5 November Kent was at least attempting to continue a dialogue opened by Swamiji. His 'Seeing God' sermon was quite a departure from his usual political preaching. He seems to be trying to get back to the basics of his spiritual calling. Long after Swamiji spoke at the People's Church, Kent remained a friend of Hinduism, welcoming Swami Abhedananda to speak there in 1898. In 1904 Kent said: 'Religions of authority are on the wane. The religion of the spirit is coming to the fore. The real function of the church is to foster and encourage this in each individual soul.'³⁷

As for scrutinising the truth or untruth of so-called yogic mysteries, magic, spiritualism, or paranormal activities, always consider the source. Although Swamiji and Baldwin both voiced scepticism regarding miracles and tricks, Swamiji spoke passionately about love for God that asks for no return, love that does not beg or bargain, and love that keeps on giving; whereas Baldwin boasted about all the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds that maharajahs had given him.



Notes and References

1. See *Washington Times*, Sunday, 21 October 1894, 12. Also, Swamiji confirmed his visit to the city in a letter to Sara Bull dated 17 October: 'Yesterday I went to see Washington and met Mrs. Colvill and Miss Young who were very kind to me.'
2. 'Fin de Siècle Femininity', *Washington Times*, Sunday, 9 December 1894, 10.
3. See *Washington Times*, Sunday, 10 March 1895, 7.
4. Letter to Ellen Hale dated 6 December 1894 confirms that he was in Cambridge. Letter to Mary Hale dated 8 December states he had been in Cambridge for three days. He might have arrived in Cambridge on the evening of the 5th.
5. See 'T. O. Howe', *Chicago Tribune*, 26 March 1883, 1.
6. In Swamiji's 18 November 1894 letter to Ellen Hale he described Mrs Totten as a niece of Grace Howe. Actually Mary Totten's father was Grace's uncle, so she was Grace's first cousin. Grace Howe was born in 1839 and Mary Howe Totten was born in 1844.
7. See 'Churches of Washington', *Washington Times*, 7 October 1894, 9.
8. See 'Letters to William Torrey Harris', Special Collections, Concord Free Public Library, Concord, MA <http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/fin_aids/Harris_WT_letters.htm> accessed 26 April 2016.
9. This topic was actually debated at the top of

Typographical Temple in 1915



- the 9 December 'Fin de Siècle' column in a report from another club, Pro-Re-Nata—without naming Harris. Harris had proposed the idea in 1889. By 1894 schools for Indians had become a secular versus religious issue, and it was a rare and controversial instance in which the federal government subsidised faith-based education. By mentioning Harris, Swamiji may have been reflecting an opinion of Mrs Totten's. She was a trustee on the board of a Girls' Reform School in Washington. A speech by Harris regarding school attendance was printed in the *Washington Times*, 16 October 1894, 2.
10. 'Only a Hindoo Monk', *Washington Post*, 29 October 1894, 6.
 11. 'The White Mahatma', *Delphos Daily Herald*, 29 August 1894, 6. This illustrated article appeared in many newspapers.
 12. Samri S Baldwin, *Secrets of the Mahatmas Explained* (Brooklyn: T J Dyson, 1895), 118.
 13. 'Pastor Pilkinton Explains, Rope Skipping and Dancing He Did Not Go to See', *New York Times*, 17 September 1894, 9.
 14. See 'A Bullet Sent Through His Hat', *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 29 October 1894, 1. This incident supposedly took place at Allyn and Ann Streets, near the location Swamiji would speak at a few months hence.
 15. *Washington Post*, 29 October 1894, 6.
 16. 'Occultism of the Far East', *Washington Times*, 14 September 1894, 2.
 17. See 'We Hear from the Oasis', *New York Sun*, 3 December 1894, 6.
 18. See *Washington Times*, 9 December 1894, 6 containing an announcement that Gandhi would teach a Sanskrit class.
 19. See 'A Hindoo on Vivisection', *Washington Post*, 25 November 1894, 4.
 20. See *Washington Times*, 30 December 1894, 7. Meeting times for the Twentieth Century Club varied. Gandhi spoke on Thursday morning, 27 December and would teach there again on Wednesday afternoon, 2 January.
 21. See 'The Hindu Women', *Evening Star*, 12 January 1895, 12. Gandhi praised Hindu monks in principle; Swamiji was not named.
 22. See Asim Chaudhuri, *Swami Vivekananda in America, New Findings* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 633–7.
 23. 'Sreemat Vivekananda Swami', *Washington Times*, Sunday, 21 October 1894, 12.
 24. See 'Brahmin Monk to Lecture', *Washington Times*, 26 October 1894, 2.
 25. 'Love Religion's Essence', *Washington Times*, 29 October 1894, 2.
 26. See 'Non-Sectarian', *Evening Star*, 17 March 1894, 3.
 27. 'The Vrooman Brothers', *Baltimore Sun*, 15 October 1894, quoted in Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*, 6 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1985), 2.206.
 28. See 'Conference of the New Church', *Washington Post*, 17 October 1894, 2. Vrooman and Swamiji may have taken the train together to Washington. Vrooman gave a talk about Swamiji in the morning session of the conference, while Swamiji met Mrs Colvill and Miss Young.
 29. 'A New Organization', *Washington Times*, Sunday, 28 October 1894, 7.
 30. There is ample evidence that the Vroomans were ardent socialists, particularly Walter. See *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 April 1894, 5.
 31. 'It is a three-story and basement structure, 44 by 108 feet, with a flat front of pressed brick, richly ornamented with terra cotta and copper and stone. ... The main hall is on the second floor and is two stories in height, well illuminated from a chandelier, and is provided with small stage and balcony.' George G Seibold, *Historical Sketch of Columbia Typographical Union Number One Hundred and One*, (Washington: National Capital Press, 1915), 34.
 32. See 'Testimonial and Request to Mr. Hirai', *Washington Times*, 22 April 1894, 2. This request was signed by Rev. Shippen, Rev. Kent, Col. R E Whitman—V Gandhi's future host—and numerous senators and cabinet members. Japan was strategically important to the US whereas India was already governed by Britain.
 33. See 'Two important conventions', *Washington Times*, 21 October 1894, 4.
 34. See 'Mr. Kent on Psychic Matters', *Evening Star*, 7 November 1893, 6.
 35. 'Real Goodness is Divine', *Washington Times*, 5 November 1894, 6.
 36. Matthew 7:7.
 37. 'Religion and the Universe', *Washington Post*, 19 September 1904, 11. Kent died in 1908, aged 71.

Claiming the Domain of the Literary: Mourning the Death of Reading Fiction

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in;
it survives,
A way of happening¹

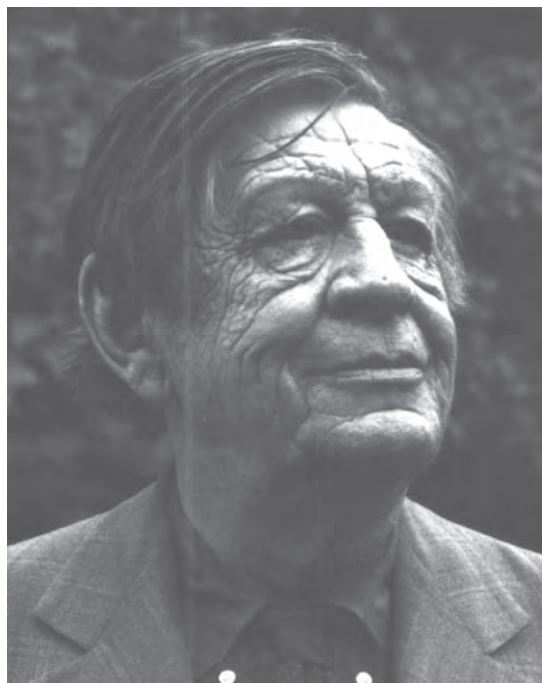
LITERATURE AS A DOMAIN of intellectual inquiry is dying since mostly what goes by the name of literature in English departments has no ‘intellectual coherence’² and ‘there is first of all the slow disappearance of literature itself from the graduate and in some places even the undergraduate curriculum. ... And for some time now, the very object of former scrutiny, the literary work, has been all but eliminated’ (ibid.).

Sadly, the works of most literary critics today are not ‘literary project[s] and will open up not a crisis *in* literature, but a general crisis and critique (social, moral, religious, political ...) for which literature or literary theory will be the privileged locus of expression.’³ Then what is it that literature majors the world over aspire to master during their time in universities? If the assumption that one studies other disciplines to become a rigorous student of literature is true, then there is no point in studying literature as an independent discipline. What is the point in majoring in English or American literature without knowing⁴ either *Emma*⁵ (1815) or *Light in August* (1932)? Literature is not a process of production and consumption. This

consumption-production idea is one of those kill-joy ideas, which destroy the desire for leading a life in letters.

One gets the idea that whatever is obscure, overtly technical—a euphemism for jargon—or incomprehensible to people at large is literature if one attends too many seminars and reads snobs like Harold Bloom. There were critics who made sense but except Terry Eagleton, that kind of a lucid writer no longer exists globally. How many can write on fiction like Mark Van Doren (1894–1972), F R Leavis (1895–1978),

W H Auden (1939–73)



Northrop Frye (1912–91), Leslie Fiedler (1917–2003), Frank Kermode (1919–2010), and Susan Sontag (1933–2004)? Gone are the days of A G Stock (see her *W. B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought*), Tarak Nath Sen (see his *Shakespeare's Short Lines*), Rabindra Kumar Das Gupta, and Kitty Scoular Dutta. Amazon book reviewers, commentators on Goodreads, and Maria Popova are anytime more literary than say Dipesh Chakraborty or Nivedita Menon.

Contemporary professional *consumers*—a sick understanding of the immersion in good books, if ever there was one—of literature say that a new kind of critique is needed to understand literature. Is it possible that contemporary styles of writing on literature have hit such new lows that jargon spewing is preferred to clarity? Why should one care for a book if it does not make us happy and not experience *jouissance*? One reads *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) by Carson McCullers (1917–67) not to write a treatise on existential angst but one finishes the book since all of us are lonely in a *cooling universe*. McCullers gets the anxiety of growing up perfectly. Having read her one will find Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir redundant. Similarly, John le Carré is read for joy and then one realises that dogmas exist only in our imagination. Sadly, now people read various *Companions* and *Introductions* first and then may sample bits of le Carré and Graham Greene.⁶ It is not theologians or philosophers who influenced either Greene or le Carré to write; rather what the theologians and philosophers could never put down in words has been expressed with panache by everyone from Muriel Spark (1918–2006), William Golding (1911–93), Bret Easton Ellis (b. 1964) to Ian McEwan (b. 1948). Literature, as Aristotle had pointed out in his *Poetics* is superior to every known human discourse.

How does one get to *know* a text? First is the issue of reading a text deeply.⁷ To study *Emma*

does not mean to watch the movie *Emma*.⁸ Neither does reading *Emma* mean reading critics on *Emma*. It means to pick up a copy of *Emma* and read the novel; letting the story of Emma Woodhouse seep in. One of the simplest tests of assessing whether a work qualifies as literature or not⁹ is to judge the effects it has on the reader. There is the reader before reading *Emma* and the reader after reading *Emma*. If such pre- and post-reading phases are not there then the text read, and not *accessed*, is not literature. Reading Sadat Hassan Manto (1912–55), most of Stephen King (b. 1947)¹⁰ and all of Herman Hesse¹¹ (1877–1962) has that pre- and post-reading effect on all readers. This effect should precede the access to critical scholarship on the texts to be read. Reading intellectual discussions on fiction comes at a later stage. The important thing is to allow the work of fiction reach out to the reader directly without the mediation of critics. The bane of literary studies is avoiding the reading of fiction. What is required of the literary scholar is not the knowledge of what C S Lewis¹² thought of *Paradise Lost*, but whether *Paradise Lost* illustrates the magical power of words to seduce us or it appears drab to a first time reader? Very few readers are not affected by the following lines:

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they
dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
They, hand in hand,
with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.¹³

Lord, what fools these mortals be!¹⁴

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle.¹⁵

What deity in the realms of dementia, what rabid god decocted out of the smoking lobes of

hydrophobia could have devised a keeping place for souls so poor as is this flesh. This mawky worm-bent tabernacle.¹⁶

The present changes the past. Looking back you do not find what you left behind.¹⁷

As if you were on fire from within.

The moon lives in the lining of your skin.¹⁸

Literary scholarship is poisoned by cram-notes, getting by with summaries on *Wikipedia*, and the urge to be avant-garde. Along with the bathwater, the baby has already been thrown out, at least within the academic study of literature. How does knowing Jacques Lacan or Julia Kristeva or the rants of Ranajit Guha help someone enjoy George R R Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, fantasy series? These copious commentators are boring compared to Martin's series or J R R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Kristeva's own novels are memorable flops.

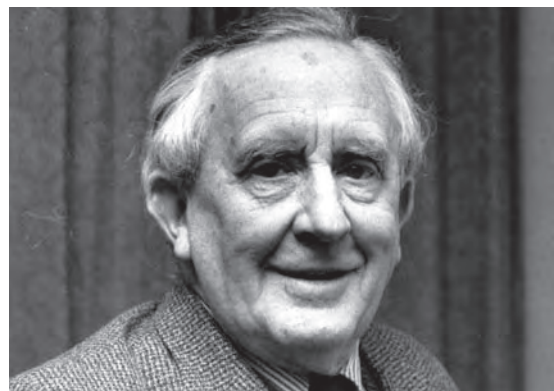
The best way to begin the study of literature is to start reading novels. One of the advantages of reading fiction is that one develops a natural understanding of what literature *is*. Beginners forget that definitions of literature come out of long engagement with literature and not through definitions put forward by other readers. One cannot begin to define the experience of riding a bicycle by reading books on bicycles! The point of studying literature is to be able to understand what literature *is* without referring to literary dictionaries and the judgement of self-proclaimed literary scions. How does it help to know that reading books constitute *acts of literature* without having read Vikram Seth, Haruki Murakami, Arthur Hailey, Wilbur Smith, Robin Cook, the *Hardy Boys* and Nancy Drew, Jeffrey Archer, Dean Koontz, Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, or Lars Kepler?¹⁹

Emma and *Light in August*²⁰ were chosen to illustrate a time-tested approach for mastering literature. Generally, in starting syllabi the world

over, *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Sound and the Fury* or *As I Lay Dying* are set for study. It is evident then that Jane Austen (1775–1817) and William Faulkner are great writers, so to get a feel of their works it may be a good idea to read other works by them. This is important because the work of literary scholars is to first see the connection between various works by the same writer and then move on to critical opinions on these works by scholars. It is to be noted that some literary critics can construct a self-serving myth that the best critical work is also literature but we all know that when we speak of being in love with books, we are not in love with the works of critics. Critics are a lesser lot no matter how exalted their writings on literature. The neophyte to literature should beware that she or he is beginning to study from the masters. Philosophers, the historians, and other varieties of social scientists are too empirical and mechanical for the independent discipline called literature. In literature one values the imaginative over the prosaic, the world of Harry Potter over child psychology; the factuality of Lady Macbeth over the reality of historical crackpots.

One has to emphasise the categorical difference between literature and other social sciences. The historian begins from the verity that she or he was born on a particular date at a particular

J R R Tolkien (1892–1973)



place. The job of the historian is grounded in facts and documents.²¹ The philosopher is convinced of a particular philosophy being the best, albeit that her or his philosophy means that there cannot be a monolithic system;²² the political scientist²³ is a nation's think tank—she or he knows that a particular system of governance is good: 'The cultivation of political understanding means that one becomes sensitized to the enormous complexities and drama of saying that the political order is the most comprehensive association and ultimately responsible, like no other grouping, for sustaining the physical, material, cultural, and moral life of its members.'²⁴ The members mentioned here are citizens; the traditional occupants of the *polis*.

What is dangerous in political science is that as a *praxis* oriented discipline it advocates 'order' over the *carnivalesque*. Literature on the other hand has no place for perfection and order. These two latter qualities are repressive and indicate a mediocrity detested by writers as separated in time and locale as John Milton and JM Coetzee (b. 1940). Milton's demons are orderly and perfect in their building of Pandemonium; Coetzee's English professor²⁵ defines *being* human by being abject.²⁶ While other disciplines have their *telos* in coherence; literature students should understand that they will be taught over the years the need to be broken and imperfect:

I saw the best minds of my generation
destroyed by madness ...

angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient
heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in
the machinery of night ...

who passed through universities with radiant
cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-
light tragedy among the scholars of war,

who were expelled from the academies
for [being] crazy ...

who wandered around and around at

midnight in the railroad yard wondering
where to go, and went,
leaving no broken hearts ...

who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the
Cross telepathy and bop kabbalah because
the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet
in Kansas.²⁷



Notes and References

1. W H Auden, *In Memory of W. B. Yeats*.
2. Edward W Said, 'Restoring Intellectual Coherence' *MLA Newsletter* 31 (Spring 1999), 2–3. Edward Said remapped literary studies and yet as this essay proves, he had his priorities right. How is it possible for someone to be interested in literature if she or he is not in love with narratives? Literary scholars are not called to be historians, ethnographers, or sociologists. The objective of the academic study of literature is to inculcate a healthy scepticism of the social sciences, the logical turn to empirical methods, and the need to be coherent. For instance, neither Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759) nor Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* (1955), quoted in this article, celebrate perfection. The American Beat writers hated coherence as much as did Oskar Matzerath in Günter Grass's novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959).
3. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Phillip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), 5. This book has some very important observations to make on Romanticism and the careful student will refer to this book while studying the Romantic Age in English Literature. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy are professional philosophers and thus are useful to our demarcations of literary territory. These two thinkers know what is not the proper domain of philosophy and thus they assert what is the literary. Literary scholars often mix up literature with philosophy. We study literature because we find more value in fiction than in the works of Martin Heidegger or Giorgio Agamben. Rumer Godden's *Black Narcissus* (1939), *In This House of Brede* (1969) and Nancy Maguire's *An Infinity of Little Hours* (2006) has more to

say about Catholic religious life than both the Rahner brothers—Hugo Rahner SJ and Karl Rahner SJ—Hans Küng, and Jacques Dupuis could ever pen. More Christian theology can be found in the novels of James Joyce and Umberto Eco than in the entire *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas. More about evil can be understood by reading John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (1952), the novels of Ramsey Campbell, Clive Barker, and Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962) than by reading the *De Malo* or other tomes on theodicy. The recently deceased Eco will be remembered not as a semiotician but as a novelist who understood the medieval world better than the historian Johan Huizinga. One gets to know more about neo-fascism by reading Stieg Larsson's (1954–2004) *Millennium* trilogy beginning with *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005) than by sifting through volumes of sociological data to find out why Anders Behring Breivik opened fire on so many innocent vacationers at Norway during 2011. Anti-psychotics are in vogue from 1954; we really do not need psychologists and psychoanalysts. The nearly incomprehensible Lacan and his type have no place in literary studies. Reading Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island* (2003) or Patrick McGrath's *Asylum* (1996) shows the uselessness of the various talk-therapies.

4. 'The reality presented for interpretation has an objective, real, ontological exigency, as intelligible, for representation by intellect through the instrumentality of such relations: these have their foundation in the presented reality; they are in it fundamentally, potentially; and it is precisely because of this that reality is intelligible, i.e. capable of being known or understood through our human modes of thought. We may err in judging, interpreting, representing the real; but when our judgments are true it is with reality that they are in conformity.' (P Coffey, *Epistemology Or The Theory of Knowledge—An Introduction to General Metaphysics*, 2 vols (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1958), 2.254). This is exactly the kind of knowledge literature as a discipline rejects. Literature celebrates the wisdom of 'the tigers of wrath' (William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*). Literature cannot be understood through our 'human modes of thought'.

5. 'Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.' (This is the first line of Jane Austen, *Emma* (New York: Knopf, 1991)). Notice the sparkle of the words, and readers should be ready to be *vexed* by literature. Literature among other things, is a very 'vexing' matter. If one is not vexed reading a novel, then that text does not qualify to be literature. Literature is that domain of academic inquiry which unsettles a person. This is in contrast to say, the study of history or philosophy. Historians try through empirical methods to be accurate. Philosophers fight with each other over the nature of truth; often seeking the absolute truth that there can be no absolute truth. For example, this author could not have been born at various dates. Nor Catholic dogma, Islamic Sunni dogmas, and Nyaya can be all true at the same time. But on the other hand Italo Calvino's *If On A Winter's Night A Traveler* (1979) is really perplexing for empiricists and social scientists, including philosophers.
6. Reading Graham Greene one understands the difficulty of the ascetical vocation more clearly than if one were to read the later Thomas Merton or Henri Nouwen.
7. See Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994), 148.
8. Film Studies is integral to the study of literature. Further, literature includes the study of films. Yet how does *Gone Girl* (2012), the book by Gillian Flynn and *Gone Girl* (2014), the movie match up? Stephen King's movies have often infuriated King. The power of words—yarns, tales, and the author-reader palaver cannot be supplanted by movies. How does one make a movie out of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712)? How many movies are like *Gone with the Wind* (1939)? The movie is as good as or even better than Margaret Mitchell's original novel by the same name (1936). But this is an exception. The movie *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (2015) based on the book by the same name by Robert Kanigel (1991) is a good case study in how directors destroy literature. While the

movie will vanish from our collective memory, the biography—a type of literature which at its best is to be found, for instance, in *The Master* by Colm Tóibín published in 2004—will bring forth better movies. Why does literary study deviate into film studies? What is weak or wrong within the discipline that literary scholars turn film critics or historians of ideas or philosophers to study literature? Is it possible that literature is too unmanageable for the career academic seeking tenure and funding, being totally useless, as true art is only aesthetically pleasing? How does a university grants' committee justify awarding a chair to someone who is an expert in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955)? Longinus (c. 1st or 3rd century CE) is of little use compared to Horace (65–8 BCE) now since worldwide literature professors earn little for the labour they put in. See Jim Hightower, 'The Sad Death of One Penniless Adjunct Professor Is Still Making a Surprising Difference', 26 March 2014 <<http://www.alternet.org/hard-times-usa/sad-death-one-penniless-adjunct-professor-still-making-surprising-difference>> accessed 30 April 2016. Also see Nabeela Nujhat, 'Don't Major in the Humanities', 23 February 2016 <<https://unc.freshu.io/nabeela-nujhat/f6adfb9-5a32-4d78-a09b-d09550d76da7>> accessed 30 April 2016, for the reality of eking out a livelihood after studying the humanities. Therefore, to make sense of something which has little real-life value, one has to bring in other more apparently sombre disciplines like philosophy and psychology. Who will pay if one were to speak continually of marital-infidelity and its reality while discussing Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1873–77), and J M Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980)? These issues have been discussed threadbare online in places as disparate as *The Chronicle for Higher Education* published from the US and the anonymous posts regarding the Russell Group of Universities to be found in forums of anonymous professors in *The Guardian*. See <<http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/series/academics-anonymous>> accessed 30 April 2016.

9. 'Perhaps one needs a different kind of approach altogether. Perhaps literature is definable not

according to whether it is fictional or "imaginative", but because it uses language in peculiar ways. On this theory, literature is a kind of writing which, in the words of the Russian critic Roman Jakobson, represents an "organised violence committed on ordinary speech". Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech. If you approach me at a bus stop and murmur "Thou still unravished bride of quietness", then I am instantly aware that I am in the presence of the literary. I know this because the texture, rhythm and resonance of your words are in excess of their abstractable meaning—or, as the linguists might more technically put it, there is disproportion between the signifiers and the signifieds. Your language draws attention to itself, flaunts its material being, as statements like "Don't you know the drivers are on strike?" do not.' (Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2003), 2). Eagleton's language is deceptively simple and studying him is the antidote to reading the likes of those who were in the *Tel Quel* group. While psychoanalytic critiques of literary texts have enriched our appreciation of authors like Edgar Allan Poe, such readings through the lens of various literary theories have made us slaves to psychoanalytic, imperialist, or philosophic jargon. The neophyte to literature will do well if she or he trains herself to write like Eagleton, at least initially.

10. Not everyone will agree that Stephen King is a literary writer. That is because most have not read him. A good place to start is his *It* (1986).
11. Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930) is one of the books that an English major should read in her or his first year, though it is a German book. Often in English literature we have to read translations of important works from other languages. One's literary training is incomplete if one has not read for instance, Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924).
12. The danger with critics like Lewis is that they are overtly Christian in their commentaries. So it is natural that he will be biased while reading *Paradise Lost*. On the other extreme is the danger that non-Christians will forget that Milton was a Christian writing for other Christians.

13. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 12.
14. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 3, Scene 2.
15. John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, Act 4, Scene 2.
16. Cormac McCarthy, *Suttree* (Picador: London, 2010), 156.
17. Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss* (New Delhi: Penguin India, 2006), 208.
18. Pablo Neruda, *Ode to A Beautiful Nude*.
19. This author is surprised that literary scholars have rarely read Seth's *A Suitable Boy* (1993), or Murakami's *1Q84* (2009–10) or the Kepler couple's *The Sandman* (2015) before pontificating on literature. One does not read *A Suitable Boy* to understand 1950s' India but to understand the very essence of being Indian in 2016. Seth's novel has not dated and this is why it is literature. Contrary to Seth's novel, newspapers and historical documents from the 1950s in archives are all dated. One cannot understand Japanese culture and religions by visiting Japan; but if one reads *1Q84*, the reality or whatness of being Japanese is made explicit through the course of the novel. But these are not sufficient reasons to read these novels. The truth is that they are wonderful tales which mesmerise the reader. Those words which seduce, hypnotise, and force us to forget ourselves in the here and the now, constitute the literary. On this count, much philosophy is boring and puts one to sleep! It is easier to understand the politics of racism in Denmark by reading the eerie *Miss Smilla's Sense of Snow* (1992) by Peter Høeg. The political opens up the public space for debate and controversy. To understand politics, one can do away with studying whether subalterns can speak or otherwise to convoluted arguments about the clash of civilisations. It is again sufficient to read Høeg's *The Quiet Girl* (2006), which created the political anew in Denmark during 2006–7. One becomes political by reading popular fiction than by pouring over avowedly political tracts penned by even Antonio Gramsci. Political science as a discipline is somewhat dull and the debate keeps revolving around whether politics is a science or not!
20. See William Faulkner, *Light in August: The Corrected Text* (New York: Vintage, 1990). As a student progresses in the study of literature, she

or he will appreciate the fact that the most important quality for literary assessment is not a willing suspension of disbelief but rather a suspension of moralising. Literature by itself is useless except for the one trait it teaches us: to be less prudish. Good and bad as *categorical imperatives* are childish and therefore, to be discarded. *Light in August* reorients our holier-than-thou attitudes. Literature teaches us that being abject, broken, and uncertain is being human. Here one would also want to refer to Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic* (1887).

21. It is impossible that Lord Clive died in a certain year and also in another year. But in fictions of time travel, Lord Clive's death may be preponed. And it is perfectly plausible that there may be many Lord Clives in multiverses and such works are studied as reality by scholars of literature. For example, one can definitely study Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* and Stephen King's *11/12/63*.
22. Literary studies have been contaminated by too much dependence on philosophy. The latter is a different discipline altogether. Unfortunately, the philosophers we study as props during the course of our literary studies are bad writers. For example, Martin Heidegger and much before him, Immanuel Kant, are very bad writers. Hegel is nearly unreadable.
23. The word 'political' is an ideologically loaded word and the beginner of literary studies should take note of it for her or his future work.
24. Sheldon S Wolin, 'Political Theory as a Vocation', *The American Political Science Review*, 63/4 (December 1969), 1062–82; 1077.
25. David Lurie's seduction of Melanie Isaacs in Coetzee's *Disgrace* is all too human. Lurie is Everyman and his life is a sign against the times, the moral highhandedness of prudish colleagues in stifling academia.
26. Abjection as a psychoanalytic trope has been popularised by Julia Kristeva. Here it is worth noticing abjection's correlation to the trope of the Suffering Servant—the Messiah, Jesus Christ—within Christianity. To be abject is to be fully human. To desire perfection is a Freudian fixation.
27. Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*.

Mandukya Upanishad

Swami Ranganathananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

IN CLASSICAL PHYSICS, science started from the belief [belief mind you]—or should one say from the illusion?’³⁵ See his words! The word ‘illusion’ comes here—from the belief or from the illusion. ‘That we could describe the world or at least parts of the world without any reference to ourselves’ (ibid.). The perceiver. Classical physics could ignore the perceiver. Only the perceived world is studied and yet it is an illusion.

This is actually possible to a large extent. We know that the city of London exists whether we see it or not. It may be said that classical physics is just that idealization in which we can speak about parts of the world without any reference to ourselves. Its success has led the general ideal of an objective description of the world. Objectivity has become the first criteria for the value of any scientific research. One may perhaps say that quantum theory corresponds to this ideal as far as possible. But it starts from the division of the world into the ‘object’ and the rest of the world, and from the fact that at least for the rest of the world we use the classical concepts in our description (ibid.).

For quantum physics, we use another language, for the rest of the world, classical. ‘This division is arbitrary and historically a direct consequence of our scientific method; the use of the classical concepts is finally a consequence of the general human way of thinking’ (ibid.). This is the language used. The general human way of thinking or human prejudice in thinking—why not put it that way? These are all coming

in physics. ‘But this is already a reference to ourselves’ (55–6). The human way of thinking means your way—a reference to man as subject comes in there, the objective is no more there then.

‘The old philosophy’, Sir James Jeans tells in *The New Background of Science*, ‘ceased to work at the end of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth-century physicist is hammering out a new philosophy for himself. Its essence is that he no longer sees nature as something entirely distinct from himself.’³⁶ What is dream? The whole world of dream is not something essentially distinct from the dreamer and that status is coming to the waking state, objective also. ‘Sometimes it is what he himself creates, or selects or abstracts; sometimes it is what he destroys’ (ibid.). Even in the waking state the world which you see is what you create. In the course of observation you destroy nature. ‘Thus the history of physical science in the twentieth century is one of a progressive emancipation from the purely human angle of vision’ (5). I would have put it as the waking angle of vision. The same thing: the human angle is the waking angle. Separate space, separate time, objects are there, they are very hard to touch, they are real—all these notions have been evaporated by science. Very hard isn’t it? What to do? If anyone says that your familiar world is being burnt out—if Vedanta had said you may doubt, but these wonderful people, scientists who give you television sets, they have said it! Therefore we respect.

In the dream world, there are several people

sharing with you in your dream but only in the dream world. Dream is a waking world. To the dreamer, you are speaking of the dream in respect to the waking self, but to the dreamer. The dreamer may be discussing science in your conference you may have in your dream. You need not go to Buffalo, you can have a real conference in dream and discussion, talks, reference to each other—all will go on in the dream. In the dream verification by others is going on. You are speaking as a waking self now—that is a prejudice. Dream state is a waking state of the dreamer. Everything is orderly; you don't find anything bizarre in dream. To the waking man it is bizarre, not in the dream. Even the flying that you do is not bizarre, quite natural. In dream it is perfectly intact. Don't view it from the waking point of view because that self is not there. This waking self is not there. There is another self there and he is dealing with another scientist. And they verify what they see. 'Yes, okay, okay.' They will shake heads—it is quite parallel. The only trouble comes when you view it from the waking state.

That is why that man said why not study the waking state from the point of view of the dream? The butterfly that I saw is dreaming about me and I am dreaming of the butterfly—which is correct? Taoists are telling that. What I mean to say is that the old structure has collapsed. You can't restore it now, according to great authorities in science. You must hammer a new philosophy for yourself. The essence is said therefore that you no longer see nature as something entirely apart from yourself. Nature includes man also, but not so in classical physics. You are an outsider looking at nature—that is gone. If that is gone you come to the dream state. In the dream state alone you are a part of nature, not the waking state.

'Thus the history of physical science in the twentieth century is one of a progressive emancipation, from the purely human angle of

vision' (ibid.) Waking angle of vision—that is the meaning. 'The physicist who can discard his human spectacles, and can see clearly in the strange new light which then assails his eyes, finds himself living in an unfamiliar world' (ibid.). That's what we are told now. The world viewed by science is an unfamiliar world. We are familiar with these objects—we are able to handle it, we are apart from it—all that. 'Which even his immediate predecessors would probably fail to recognise' (ibid.).

'The old science which pictured nature as a cloud of blindly wandering atoms, claimed that it was depicting a completely objective universe, entirely outside of, and detached from, the mind which perceived it' (281–2). That was how we considered till now. 'Modern science makes no such claim, frankly admitting that its subject of study is primarily our observation of nature, and not nature itself' (282). That is a very humble submission. 'The new picture of nature must then inevitably involve mind as well as matter—the mind which perceives and the matter which is perceived—and so must be more mental in character than the fallacious picture which preceded it' (ibid.). This is purely from the scientific angle of critique. The picture is more mental than physical and the only experience is dream which can confirm this particular truth and space-time unity you get only in dream, not in the waking state. In dream you find unity of space and time. The movement of dream makes for time and you find a space in it but you can't get a separate space because constant movement is there. Time and space are welded in the dream state.

When you study experiences in dream you find that whatever scientists are claiming in the waking world, you already find it in the dream state. Time and space are welding there. How do you weld space and time? Take an example, here is a train starting from Sydney to your town, 130,

140, 150 miles or so. You put it as a graph: this is time, this is distance. Here is Sydney. Now this train is going to this town. What is the name of the town? Bathurst. Now, how do you picture the movement of the train which involves space as well as time? So this is time coordinate, this is space coordinate, and it is here. So, in the first hour, you got here. For the first forty miles, wherever in the graph that place is, you put a dot. The next hour another dot and so on, and four or five dots you have got. In three hours it reaches there. So, you put a graph line. This is the movement of the train where the space and time are blended in. That is the point. This is how you create a graph. Time and space, the movement of the train is a movement. It is not just separate space and separate time, movement always involves time and space—movement through space, movement through time. So, you put a graph.

In dream you are exactly seeing this. There is time, there is space—the graph only you see, in dream. Just like in a cinema picture. Series of pictures, independent items of pictures, but in motion, where time comes in, you find a successful story produced in a screen. Just a man is washing his face, first picture like this, second picture like this, third picture like this, fourth picture like this—all spatial individual items. Like that, like that—all that is going on. Then, in dream, the whole thing is continuous. Here also when the cinema moves the whole thing becomes a continuous action, though they are all discrete. So, space and time get welded. In TV, on Sundays they show football—quick football and slow football. In slow football everything moves slowly. Very interesting to see. Where time is slowed for you to observe more correctly. So today's science is closer to Vedanta, that's all what we mean. It may not be close to our prejudice but it is close to Vedanta. Attachment, attachment, attachment—waking world alone is

real—that attitude is our prejudice. The waking world is not real. Even from the point of view of change, it is constantly changing. You may call that real. However, I call the dream also real because it is constantly changing, I will say it is real. We take the common property of being seen, being an observed object. The subject you have never entered into yet; I say that is unreal.

'Yet the essence of the present situation in physics is not that something mental has come into the new picture of nature, so much as that nothing non-mental has survived from the old picture' (ibid.). See the difference between the two. You are not adding anything mental to the material picture. The material is dissolved, mind is remaining. 'As we have watched the gradual metamorphosis of the old picture into the new, we have not seen the addition of mind to matter so much as the complete disappearance of matter, at least of the kind of which the older physics constructed its objective universe' (ibid.). What will you say to that? All madness that's all you can say!

Waking reason, waking logic. Dream reason, dream logic. We want a higher reason, which comprehends both. That is Vedantic reason. I quote from M K Bradby's book *The Logic of the Unconscious Mind*.

The human mind is somewhere on the way to perfection moving, along the now familiar lines of organic growth, lines of "differentiation and integration". At each advancing stage some element is made explicit which before was implicit, some content of mind brought out, defined and emphasised, which already existed in embryo [in the beginning]. But if reason be the highest faculty yet known, there are thinkers who look for its successor.³⁷

For this waking reason, who is its successor? It is very limited. There must be something higher. 'And belittle reason in their longing for that power which shall transcend it; a power,

they hope, less arduous and exacting in its demands upon the will. The power transcending reason may, however, best be served by those who develop reason itself to the height of its capacity' (xi). Bradby said that. That is what Vedanta did: waking reason or the waking logic, dream reason, dream logic, integrated both in a wider reason, which could take both in. That is Vedantic *buddhi*.

'The new is soonest reached through developing the old' (ibid.). So that is the subject. Very interesting. It is good to get shocked. If the world is to deliver some spirituality, tyranny of the waking state has to suffer it. The object of the waking state is tyranny. These positions, power, violence—what is all this? It is too much attachment to the waking state. Find out the truth. Even men like R D Laing, the British psychologist, they speak highly of this schizophrenic mind. Schizophrenia is not all that bad! Cut off from this reality. Only thing is, it is uncontrolled schizophrenia—that is bad. It has also got a locus on its own. Creativity comes there.

So, you saw this proposition: waking objects are unreal. No question of accepting here, only a new thought is put before you, you find out. You see knowledge does not destroy anything. Remember that. Does it destroy the waking object? No! You get a new perspective. Just like light. When you put on the light, does it destroy any object? It illumines it. So, knowledge today illumines the nature of reality better than what it was fifty years ago. So, a little changing of our attitude becomes necessary. All this materialism that was sponsored by classical physics, that materialism cannot stand now. Every scientific writer today mentions it.

'The thoughtful persons speak of the sameness of the waking and dream states on account of similarity of objects (perceived in both the states) on grounds already described.'³⁸ Then

comes the definition of reality in the sixth verse. Verse five states this: '*Svapna-jagaritasthane hyekamahurmanishinah, bhedanam hi samatvena prasiddhenaiva hetuna.*' *Manishinah* means wise men. *Man-isha* are those who rule the mind, they are called wise people. See the language: he who rules his mind is a wise man. *Isha* means ruling and *man* means mind; *manishinah*. *Manisha* is wisdom. A girl's name is there: *manishi*, *manisha*. Little girls are named *manisha*; beautiful name. *Manishi* is masculine, wise people. *Svapnajagaritasthane hi ekam*; both are one. *Ekam* is one. *Adi* is one. *Manishinah*, wise people say. *Svapnajagritasthana* are one and the same. '*Bhedanam hi samatvena prasiddhenaiva hetuna.*' All the objects seen are of one and the same style.

Now comes the definition of what is real. 'That which is non-existent at the beginning and in the end, is necessarily so (non-existent) in the middle. The objects are like the illusions we see, still they are regarded as if real' (92). They are illusory but you regard them as real. Investigation reveals, if you don't investigate, no problem. I am a criminal. I rob, beat, and kill people. I don't investigate further on whether I am doing the right thing or not. It doesn't affect me but when I begin questioning my actions, then all these things come in. Why should I do like that? Because I think I am a Satan in this body. I don't care for others. No, that is not correct. As soon as you think so, you go beyond the waking limitation, any such questions when you ask.

Adi is the word for one, beginning in Sanskrit. *Ante* means in the end. Beginning and end. *Cha yan-nasti*, that doesn't exist in the beginning and the end. *Vartamanepi tat-tatha*. If so, even it exists in the middle that is also as good as non-existent. Just like a ghost suddenly appearing and disappearing. He was not there and he is not there now; he is in between. That is why you

call it a ghost isn't it? What is the definition of a ghost? If he used to come every day for the class and pay for your retreat here and stay, you won't call him a ghost. It suddenly appears and disappears; therefore we call it a ghost. Matter is like a ghost, Bertrand Russell said.³⁹ '*Vitathaih sadrishah santo'vitatha iva lakshitah*.' Though they are really unreal, people out of attachment call these real. *Avitatha iva lakshitah*—that is the wonderful definition.

'The objects perceived to exist in the waking state are unreal for this reason also, that they do not really exist either at the beginning or at the end. Such objects (of experience) as mirage etc., do not really exist either at the beginning or at the end. Therefore they do not (really) exist in the middle either. This is the decided opinion of the world.'⁴⁰ Even the world accepts this definition, says Shankaracharya. Everything is just here and then disappears; if it was not here, it is not going to disappear. Just an apparition! What is the meaning of the word 'apparition' in English? Apparition means a thing that was not there, that was not going to be there, in between it came. Just showed its face and went away, that is called apparition. Exact word—apparition. The world is an apparition. Today many scientists will accept it. Those who do not accept, they do not accept because they are full of attachment for the high salary that they are getting. The waking salary is more important than the dream salary! 'The several objects perceived to exist really in the waking state are also of the same nature. Though they (the objects of experience) are of the same nature as illusory objects, such as mirage, etc., on account of their non-existence at the beginning and at the end, still they are regarded as real by the ignorant, that is, the persons that do not know *Ātman*' (ibid.), do not know true reality. When you know the *Atman* you realise that these are illusory objects.

At present, you cannot say so. But, when you penetrate, this truth comes to you.

'Illusory objects are those that have no existence at the beginning and at the end' (ibid.). When you look at the cloud, you see it to be like Australia, after sometimes it is something else, something else, something else—constantly changing. The whole thing is unreal, illusory. The *Karika* emphasises 'the non-existence of the perceived objects at the beginning and at the end' (ibid.). You perceive a thing; the next perception is already changing. This you become clearer of, when you read particle physics. Every fraction of a second it is changing, changing, changing—coming to birth, disappearing, coming to birth, disappearing, constantly at a low atomic level. 'The ego is the perceiver (*Dr̥k*) of all objects seen. The ego does not change as it is the witness of all changes. The perceived objects are known to be illusory or unreal in comparison with the perceiver' (ibid.).

Because we don't deal with the perceiver, all these are real to us. When you deal with the perceiver these are all unreal. They come and they go. One argument is there: But, these waking objects have a utilitarian value. Dream objects have no utilitarian value. You raise that question. That is the next verse. They have also their utilitarian value, perfectly. 'The serving a purpose (as a means to an end) of them (the objects of waking experience) is contradicted (opposed) in dream. Therefore they are undoubtedly admitted to be illusory on account of their (both waking and dream) being with a beginning and an end' (93). Waking objects are real because they are utilitarian but they are negated in the dream. All the food that you ate, their utility in the dream and in the waking states is different. Go to the dream state, you are hungry, but all that food is gone. Where is the utility there?

So, Shankara's commentary states the

objection: ‘The assertion that the objects perceived to exist in the waking state are illusory like those of the dream state is illogical. It is so because the objects of the waking experience, such as food, drink or vehicles are seen to serve some purpose, that is, they appease hunger and thirst as well as do the work of carrying a man to and fro’ (ibid.). Our fine motorcar, in the waking state, how do you say it is unreal? It serves the purpose—very good argument. ‘Therefore the conclusion that the objects perceived in the waking state are unreal like those seen in dream is a mere fancy’ (ibid.).

It is not true. It is separate. That is the objection. And the reply comes: ‘It is not so. ... It is because the serving as means to some end or purpose which is found in respect of food, drink etc. (in the waking state) is contradicted in dream’ (ibid.). Whatever is useful in the waking state is not useful in dream. What has utility in the waking state has no utility in dream. ‘A man, in the waking state, eats and drinks and feels appeased and free from thirst. But as soon as he goes into sleep, he finds himself (in dream) afflicted with hunger and thirst as if he were without food and drink for days and nights’ (ibid.). I am sure all of you must have had such experience. The experiences and the experiencer of the waking state do not exist in the dream state. The experiencer is different. The experiencer in the waking state and the experiencer in the dream state are two different beings.

Nothing unfamiliar is mentioned here. Whatever is mentioned here so far is man’s experience. Don’t you think that a poor man dreams that he is rich? Doesn’t he? Why should it be so? If he is poor in the waking state, he must be poor in the dream state. Utility in the waking state is contradicted in dream. And that utility is specific to that state. Dream utility is perfectly correct utility in the dream. It has no reference to the

waking state. Waking utility has no reference to dream. When a rich man can dream he is poor, what does it show? This utility doesn’t function there. From the point of the substratum, a higher logic beyond waking, beyond dream is to trying to investigate the subject. It is a higher logic. The waking logic will dismiss the whole thing as nonsense. But not so, the higher logic. Modern science has got that higher logic.

Unless you are shaken from that waking ego state you can never come to the witness state. Your witness is objective. You have to be shaken from the tyranny of the waking ego and its assessment of things. That is our habitual thing. To break from a habit is difficult. The waking ego and the waking evaluation—that is a habitual thing. But it is because you have not investigated the truth. When you investigate, you find these new differences coming up. Waking ego’s assessment cannot be taken as final, as the physics tells you today—classical and non-classical. That is all. You must come to terms with this new physics. That real world ceases to exist now.

Waking ego and the dream ego have their own value-systems and the witness self is trying to understand the two. Impartial, does not want to destroy one in place of the other. The spiritual experiences in the waking state and the spiritual experiences in the dream state belong to different orders of experience. As an independent witness you are benefiting from these two. I have become all spiritual. It is not that only the waking man is spiritual. You become more spiritual. And, ultimately both the egos are one. It is only one Self that experiences as *Vaishvanara* and *Taijasa*, in each state.

Mr John is at home with his wife and children and Mr John is in the office—two different egos are functioning. This John is not the same thing as that John. See the difference between the two. But it is unified by a deeper John. We are going

to investigate who is that deeper fellow. There all these discussions come. Where is that John who runs through all the Johns. These are functional Johns but not the being John—I use the words ‘functional’ and ‘being’. Suppose a man says, ‘I am a husband’. That is only a functional relationship; that is not your whole personality. What is your being? Unless you detach yourself from that function, you can never understand your being. ‘No, no. I am always her husband; only her husband.’ Nobody can say so. He is a texture of thousand relations. This is only one of them. But, what is that real you? For that investigation you need all this discussion. Until you are shaken from that attachment of the waking state, it will never come. Spiritual development cannot come without that detachment from the waking reality. Modern science helps you to be more spiritual, not merely material.

You are not aware that you are dreaming; you are waking in dream. The dream is a waking state to the dreamer. The most important truth there to the dreamer is that the dream is not a dream. It is the waking state. One can have a dream in the dream itself. For example, a dreamer in dream goes to bed, wakes up, washes, takes breakfast, goes to work—all these you can do. You have passed through all these states, because it is a waking state for you.

What happens is this: you take things for granted. Then, you remain in this limited condition of the waking state. When you are not satisfied with it, you investigate. Then the world tumbles down. When you investigate, your whole world tumbles down. And so you say: ‘No, no. I don’t want to investigate; I just want to keep quiet.’ It is called an ‘ostrich policy’. When an ostrich is attacked, it buries itself in sand, very safe. So, don’t be an ostrich.

Here, we are investigating what is the truth, what is the reality. Attachment has no place

there. There is no harm if ultimately, I do find this waking world alone to be real; my share market and all these things alone to be real. Then, that is our God; Moloch God. So, worship the Moloch, if that is the final truth. If not, depose him. Find out the truth. The world is real till you investigate it. The dream is real till you investigate it. If we investigate, both cease to be real. Investigate is the word. Is this class itself a dream class? We are not having the class in dream! This dream world of the class will stop and we will wake up when the bell rings for tea!

You are talking on behalf of the waking state now; you have not taken an independent point of view. If you take the dream state as an appendage to the waking state, it is perfectly all right. That is why Freud asked you not to dream. Dream has its own status. Interpretation of dreams, he calls it. But, he is opening only a little lid of a profound subject. The waking intellect, what is it? It is just a fugitive in the hands of subconscious forces within man. This intellect can be upset in no time. Waking values, waking world—everything gets upset. When you suffer a little mental breakdown, psychic breakdown—everything changes. For the man in the mental hospital, where is the waking reality? There are people who sweep the floor all the while crying, ‘I am Queen Victoria’! There is no coordination of experiences there. He takes the broomstick puts it on the bed and he stands in the corner. He thinks he is the broomstick. ‘Broomstick is the person, I am the broomstick.’ He stands in the corner. The waking reality has broken down for him, completely. A new set of reality has come.

If you study dream from the point of view of the waking state for the clinical purposes of the waking, you get one result. Here, we are concerned with the truth of human nature. Otherwise, you can always deal with dream from the point of view of the waking state. Just like sleep.

What is sleep? You get refreshed. The waking man gets refreshed. It is quite alright. But you are not investigating the true thing: what does this dream and dreamless sleep reveal as to the true nature of man in the world? That is a philosophical question. Only then will all these up-setting come. When the scientists saw truths in the material world and found that an objective material world cannot exist on its own and must be always related to the subject, they discovered a profound truth. They are not doing Freud's psychology. They are dealing with truth. Psychology is dealing with utility. How to put this man into health again? That is quite alright. That you do, there is plenty of scope of psycho-analyses, psychiatry, everything. But this is a different study of dream. Dream studied with a view to knowing what is truth? What is abiding? What is immortal? What is real? Only then all these confusions come.

Then you transcend these states and come to the state of the real observer, the seer, the Self. It is my true nature. I exist in all these states. That is my true nature. I am the *Turiya*. '*Tat tvam asi*, you are that.' You don't miss anything by that knowledge; only you miss your delusions. Illusions will go. Waking state will continue, dream state will continue, bank account will continue—everything will continue. But when knowledge comes, that delusion won't be there. Acts of delusion won't be there. That is knowledge.

In the dream state, you can become a saint. Suppose you dream sometimes that you are a saint. It is a good experience. Dreaming that you are a criminal is a bad experience. Dreaming that you are a saint is a good experience because it will have a tremendous impact upon your total development. Both the waking and dream states come together to make you spiritual. Not merely the waking state. So dreaming about god, people

getting a mantra or spiritual initiation in dream is considered to be very good for the total man, who becomes spiritual. And, it affects the waking experience. I become more tolerant, more peaceful, more pure, because the depth of the personality has been touched.

Where there is non-apprehension of reality we don't call it a waking state. It is a dream state. So we say that both the waking and dream states have a common characteristic: non-apprehension of reality as misapprehension of reality. Both are there. When you don't know reality you project something else as reality. These two exist in dream and waking states. And in sleep, purely non-apprehension. No projection is there. Here there is projection. So after studying that you turn your attention to the subject. Who is this dreamer? Having disposed off the objects of dream, contents of dream, contents of the waking state, you want to know who this dreamer, this waking self is. Then you come to this study and conclude: 'I am that eternal self to whom waking and dream are so many passing experiences.' So attachment to one goes, attachment to the other goes—you are not attached either to the waking self or to the dream self—that is *jnana*, illumination—that will come later on. The next chapter is full of that. *Advaita Prakarana* is the next chapter, knowledge of the non-duality of the self. You see, knowledge does not destroy anything. Suppose I realise the truth of the Atman. My bank account is not destroyed thereby. No knowledge destroys anything but delusions are destroyed. Waking delusions are there, which explain all the evils that we do in the waking state. Those delusions won't be there. Arrogance, pride, I am rich, I am arrogant—all that will go by knowledge of this coordinative study of waking, dream, and sleep. You find it in dream—sense of utility, you find

in waking—sense of utility. ‘Hence, we think that the illusoriness of the objects perceived in the waking state like those of dream need not be doubted. Therefore both these objects are undoubtedly admitted to be illusory on account of their common feature of having a beginning and an end’ (93–4).

Verse six is the criterion of reality. Verse seven deals with utility. Now, verse eight: The objects (perceived by the dreamer), not usually met with (in the waking state) undoubtedly, owe their existence to the peculiar condition in which the cognizer, that is, his mind, works for the time being, as in the case of those residing in heaven’ (94). In heaven people see so many experiences.

(To be continued)

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IMAGE: FRACTAL TURBINE BY CYBERXAOS / DEVIANART

Vedanta Answers

Swami Smaranananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

[Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, has been asked various questions regarding various aspects of spiritual life by the young and old alike, over a period of time. This is a collection of such questions and his answers to them—*Editor*.]

QUESTION: Can we use the problem faced to purify the mind?

Answer: The only way to purify the mind is to think pure thoughts.

Question: Why am I not able to ask questions? Is it because I do not understand anything or I am not understanding in the way it needs to be understood?

Answer: If you understand things without asking questions, then why should you worry about asking questions? If there is a genuine quest, answers can be got from your mind itself. *Pariprashna* means asking an enlightened person, a question, as told in the Gita (4.34).

Question: Is it dangerous to even aim for a desire to be desireless?

Answer: A clever question! To aim to be desireless is not dangerous. In this mortal world, all things are fraught with fear; only dispassion and renunciation, leads to fearlessness. Read *Vairagya Shatakam* and *Niti Shatakam* written by Bhartrihari.

Question: What is the meaning of ‘satisfaction’?

Answer: See the *Oxford Dictionary*. When you obtain something that you want, then you attain satisfaction.

Question: I saw a documentary, which says that we attract a situation by our thinking. It was called ‘Law of attraction’. Is this completely true?

Answer: Partially true. Situation can be created by our thoughts sometimes.

Question: Problems created in life sometimes seem unsolvable, but there lies a solution too. Why do we always look at problems? Is it our nature to look at problems and shun ourselves from other values of life?

Answer: What you write being unsolvable may be true in your case, but not for all. If you can free your mind from desires and negative thoughts, it is possible to solve all problems.

Question: If pleasure is related to pain, then if I reduce pleasures, will it reduce pain for me? Can you describe the state of mind of a person who does not get affected by pleasure or pain?

Answer: Yes, if you get rid of pleasures, the mind would become free from pain. A person who is free from pleasure or pain will be calm and serene under all circumstances.

Question: How should we respond to the jealousy and greed of others?

Answer: Be indifferent to others’ jealousy and greed. *Upeksha*, indifference, is what Patanjali advises.

Question: I find it difficult to concentrate on a particular thing, due to many distracting thoughts like my family problems, insufficient self-growth, finance, and so on. These things reduce my self-confidence.

Answer: Life is a challenge. Problems are

bound to be there. Strengthen your mind to face challenges.

Question: Swamiji, I fear rejection even when I am right. How can I overcome this fear?

Answer: Rejection by what? Get rid of attachment; then you need not fear rejection by anything or anybody.

Question: How does one translate this confidence, strength in mind to a confident strong body in action? How does one condition the body as we do the mind for strength?

Answer: Keep your body healthy and strong. If necessary consult a physical trainer.

Question: What is belief? What is truth? Are belief and truth interdependent?

Answer: Belief may go wrong, but the truth is the same in all circumstances and at all times. Truth does not depend on any belief.

Question: Swamiji, I would like to know the inherent meaning of the chanting of mantras and that of the mantras themselves?

Answer: Read books on the mantras that are chanted. Translations are available.

Question: Is meditation the only way to explore the Self?

Answer: For exploring anything, even matters related to physical science, meditation or concentration is necessary. That is the only way to the Truth. Buddha sat down under the Bodhi tree and decided to meditate till he found the truth and he succeeded.

Question: What are the tools for correct self-assessment? Can others misguide us out of their ignorance or selfish interest? How to identify our true well-wishers?

Answer: You have to use your own intelligence to find out whether advice given to you is right or wrong.

Question: We read many books regarding personality development and try to follow them. After some time we find it difficult and stop following

the guidance given by these books. How can one persistently follow such teachings?

Answer: Whatever may be in the books, you will have to use your own intelligence. You can increase your self-confidence by reading Swami Vivekananda.

Question: What can invoke the 'power' within us? How can we be reminded of our inexhaustible potential?

Answer: A great ideal and a determined effort to reach that ideal will release the power within us.

Question: What should we do when we have self-confidence to do a task but we also doubt our knowledge or capabilities to do the task?

Answer: These statements are contradictory. If you have self-confidence to do a task, then how can there be doubt about your capability and knowledge?

Question: What is learning? What are the different stages in it? What does it mean by being learned? Can it be defined in terms of accumulated knowledge, discerning power, and analytical capability?

Answer: Usually, one is said to be a person of learning if one is well read in a particular subject. But, accumulated knowledge and reasoning ability makes one a person of learning or erudite scholar.

Question: What is that in a person that influences us? Is it how much one has struggled to find one's real nature? How to quantify it?

Answer: Powerful personalities influence others. For example, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Abraham Lincoln, and so on. To get an idea about the struggles of successful persons, read books like *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale.

(To be continued)

Swami Premananda's Teachings

Swami Omkareshwarananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

TODAY IS THURSDAY, 9 December 1915. It is eight o'clock in the night. Baburam Maharaj [Swami Premananda] is sitting in the western side of the resting room of Belur Math. There will be devotional singing soon. One devotee was tuning the tabla. When the tabla was tuned, Baburam Maharaj said: 'Let there be singing of the songs of Ramprasad!' The monks started singing songs written by Ramprasad, in unison.

Taking the name of Kali, dive deep down,
O mind,
Into the heart's fathomless depths,
Where many a precious gem lies hid.
But never believe the bed
of the ocean bare of gems
If in the first few dives you fail;
With firm resolve and self-control
Dive deep and make your way
to Mother Kali's realm.
Down in the ocean depths
of heavenly Wisdom lie
The wondrous pearls of Peace, O mind;
And you yourself can gather them,
If you but have pure love
and follow the scriptures' rule.
Within those ocean depths, as well,
Six alligators lurk—lust anger, and the rest—
Swimming about in search of prey.
Smear yourself with the turmeric of
discrimination;
The very smell of it will shield you
from their jaws.
Upon the ocean bed lie strewn
Unnumbered pearls and precious gems;
Plunge in, says Ramprasad,
and gather up handfuls there!¹²

They started singing again.

O Kali, you have removed
all woes
All scriptures are Shiva's
words,
would you believe it or
not?

You love the cremation ground
and lie upon store of gems
The Lord is like oneself,
the intoxication does not wear off.
O Mother! One that becomes your devotee,
has a matchless lustre.
(On his) waist does not stay the loin-cloth,
his body smeared with ashes
and matted locks on head.
Bringing me to this earth,
you have given me sledgehammer blows.
Yet I call upon you Kali, O Mother,
indeed I have courage!
Ramprasad, the son of Brahmayi,
chants your name in the entire neighbourhood.
Who can fathom the mystery
of this behaviour of Mother to son!

When the song ended, Baburam Maharaj repeatedly said in a sweet voice: 'Repeat the name of Hari! Repeat the name of Hari!' It was as if nectar was pouring from every word. Harmonium and tabla were kept at their requisite place in the temple. All are sitting silently expecting to hear the words of Baburam Maharaj.

[‘Devoid of the fever of the soul, engage in battle by dedicating all actions to Me with (your) mind intent on the Self, and becoming free from expectations and egoism.’]¹³



Nowadays, some of the new brahmacharins cut grass for the cows, some clean the cowshed, and some make cow-dung cakes. Even brahmacharins, who have graduated from universities, are engaged in such work. Baburam Maharaj told them: 'Any work done like a servant offering all the results of actions to the Lord, is a great work and would purify one's mind. There is no small or big work in selfless action. Work is meant for purifying the mind. "One has right only to work, not to its results" (2.47). One should work selflessly without bothering about the results.

'The mind has to be tempered. One has to analyse now and then and see whether the work is being done selflessly. One should check whether there is only a show of selflessness outside, while the mind is dwelling on egotism inside. One has to do work with great alertness so that selfishness does not enter oneself. Beware! When the paddy is husked, one has to ensure now and then whether the husking is proper. Similarly, one has to now and then check and analyse whether work eventually removes selfishness, hatred, jealousy, attachment, and impurity from the mind.

'One's ego may not decrease by doing great works. So, it is better that one gives up the ego and do small works. Work is bondage. Again, work is liberation. However, one has to work skilfully. This skill is called yoga. "Yoga is skilfulness in action" (2.50). If one is focussed on the goal of purification of the mind, one would not be swayed by praise, glory, or ill-fame and one would also be able to do the work properly. It is not our ideal to do great works ignoring the purification of the mind. One can dupe people. But, the Lord is omniscient and cannot be duped. And, who would you dupe? If you dupe, you would be duped yourself and your life would be a failure.' Saying thus, he sang:

O mind, you do not know how to farm!
Fallow lies the field of your life.
If you had only worked it well,

How rich a harvest you might reap!
Hedge it about with Kali's name
If you would keep your harvest safe;
This is the stoutest hedge of all,
For Death himself cannot come near it.
Sooner or later will dawn the day
When you must forfeit your precious field;
Gather, O mind, what fruit you may.
Sow for your seed the holy name
Of God that your guru has given to you,
Faithfully watering it with love;
And if you should find the task too hard,
Call upon Ramprasad for help.¹⁴

'That is why I tell you, if you want to fulfil your lives, align your thought and speech. I understand only that one has to become selfless and all-renouncing. "*Na anyah pantha vidyate ayanah*; there is no other path to go by."¹⁵

['O scion of the Bharata dynasty, as the unenlightened people act with attachment to work, so should the enlightened person act, without attachment, being desirous of the prevention of people from going astray.']¹⁶

'One who is making cow-dung cakes and is attending to the cows is doing a work that is in no way inferior to the work of the person who is doing the ritual worship in the temple, if the work is done in the spirit of service to Sri Ramakrishna. It is only to bring the ethos of selflessness that I make them work. How can one go beyond activity without doing any work? One just becomes lazy by not working. It is also told in the Gita: "A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from action" (3.4).'

(To be continued)

References

12. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 124-5.
13. Bhagavadgita, 3.30.
14. *Gospel*, 251.
15. *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 3.8.
16. Gita, 3.25.

The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life

Swami Nityasthananda

(Continued from the April 2016 issue)

HE NARRATES A STORY as an illustration: The Lama of the South sent a request to the Great Lama of the North for a wise and holy monk to train the novices. To everyone's astonishment, the Great Lama sent five monks instead of one. To those who enquired he said, cryptically, 'We will be lucky if one of them gets to the Lama.'

The group had been on the road for some days when a messenger came running up to them and said: 'The priest of our village has died. We need someone to take his place.' The village seemed a pleasant place and the priest's salary was princely. One of the monks was seized with pastoral concern. 'I should not be a Buddhist,' he said, 'If I did not serve these people.' So he dropped out. Some days later they were at the palace of a king who took a fancy to one of them. 'Stay with us,' said the king, 'and you shall marry my daughter. And when I die, you will be the king.' The monk was drawn to the lustre of the throne, so he said: 'What better way to influence the people of this kingdom than to be the king? I should not be a Buddhist if I did not seize this chance to serve the interest of religion.' He too dropped out.

One night, in a hilly region, the monks came to the solitary hut of a pretty girl who gave them hospitality and thanked God for their presence. Her parents had been killed by mountain bandits and the girl was all alone and very fearful. Next day, when it was time to leave, one of the monks declared: 'I shall stay on here. I should not be a Buddhist if I did not show compassion to this girl.'

The remaining two finally came to a Buddhist village and were scandalised to find that the inhabitants had abandoned their religion under the influence of a Hindu theologian. One of the monks said: 'I owe it to these people and to the Lord Buddha himself to win them back to the faith.' The fifth monk eventually got to the Lama of the South.²⁵

There is a Bengali saying: '*Tomar puja chhale tomake bhule thaki*'; in the pretext of worshipping you, I forget you.'

Dissociation • Sometimes an inner conflict is resolved by means of dissociation, which means that different conflicting tendencies are alternatively satisfied, not allowing them to come together to the conscious mind. Many people follow different moral codes for different occasions—one for business, one for private life, and so on. There are some who are very spiritual in temples and ashramas and follow iniquitous practices in the field of their activities. They carefully prevent their devotion to God from infringing their corrupt practices. We find some split-personalities who are intensely spiritual at one time and equally sensuous at other times. Some are 'angels outside and devils inside.' There are even instances of multiple personalities. Ravana's ten heads may perhaps, point out to his multiple personality. Demons in some *Puranas* assuming different forms might be the case of this psychological phenomenon. Here one is reminded of the story of the archbishop who was also the prince, told by Swami Yatiswarananda:

“The story is told of a certain Elector of Cologne in Germany who was also an Archbishop. One day he used profane words in the presence of a farmer who could not conceal his astonishment. Trying to justify himself he said, “My good man, I am swearing not as an archbishop, but as a prince.” For which the intelligent farmer replied: “But, your Highness, when the Prince goes to hell what will become of the Archbishop?”²⁶

Conversion Hysteria • Sometimes the emotional conflicts may get converted into physical ailments. If a person is very much dissatisfied with his work at hand, some physical disease may help him to escape from that work. The person who is utterly ignored or the one who imagines so, may contract some ailment to draw others’ attention. Those who cannot adjust themselves with a particular situation, work, or people around, usually complain that the weather is not good for their health or food is not suitable to their system, and this attitude possibly affects their health. Now, it is no more a mere assumption that many physical illnesses are caused by negative emotions. If we can maintain a good human relationship, if we cultivate the spirit of acceptance wherever we are placed, and give up the habit of complaining and blaming, we can pursue our spiritual practice undisturbed—provided we are sincere about it. And it is also true that if we are more interested in spiritual practice, if our inner being is suffused with spiritual ideal, external trials and tribulations will not make a deep scar within us, and we will be able to weather them better.

The following psychological statements can be good health tips for many:

People with stomach trouble are usually ‘quit complainers’ that you will cross the street in the middle of a block to avoid.

Strong condemning judgments damage the health of the one doing the fault finding.

People who have a martyr complex and feel

that they have injustice through circumstances and because of other people, usually have stomach trouble.

Hatred and unforgiveness cause hardness and rigidity in the cells of the stomach which particularly affect one’s health there.

Indigestion is the result of what has been taken in the mind without liking or approving of it.

If all the time and money that are spent to regulate one’s diet were spent to regulate one’s thoughts and purify one’s emotions, the diseases of the stomach would totally disappear.²⁷

However, one should not conclude that all physical ailments are due to mental problems.

Nature of the Mind

Acharya Shankara gives a beautiful picture of the mind: ‘The mental sheath is the (sacrificial) fire which, fed with the fuel of numerous desires by the sense-organs which serve as priests, and set ablaze by the sense-objects which act as stream of oblations, brings about this phenomenal universe.’²⁸

We have already seen how the mind deceives us. Therefore, it is essential to discern the hidden motives behind our actions and speech, analysing the mind objectively and dispassionately. At the outset we must try to know the nature of the mind. *Yogavasishta* gives the following picture of the mind with an analogy: ‘The tree called mind which is surrounded by creepers called *vrittis*, is produced out of two seeds. One is the vibration of *prana* and the other is intense thinking.’

(To be continued)

References

25. See Anthony De Mello, SJ, *The Song of the Bird* (New York: Image, 1984), 91–4.
26. Swami Yatiswarananda, *Meditation and Spiritual Life* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2009), 73.
27. Catherine Ponder, *The Healing Secrets of the Ages* (Camarillo: DeVorss, 1985).
28. Acharya Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, 168.

TRADITIONAL TALES

The Midnight Vedantic Roar

(Continued from the previous issue)



WITH GREAT JOY, the king requested the great young *jivanmukta*: ‘O Lord! Please let me know if you wish to do any work in the palace. I will immediately appoint you.’

The *jivanmukta* said: ‘Don’t you give capital punishment to those who commit heinous crimes? Please send such criminals to me. I wish to kill them myself with the sword. I pray the

king to kindly accede to this request of mine.’

The king could not understand why the *jivanmukta* was making such a strange request. Nonetheless, the king ordered his officers to fulfil the request. The officers made a hut for the *jivanmukta* near the execution site. Nearby was constructed another place for the staying of the criminals. The young *jivanmukta*, who was once considered dumb, started diligently performing

the task of giving capital punishment to criminals by killing them with his sword. Some years passed in this manner.

One day, Yama, the god of death went with a worried face to Brahma, the god of creation. Seeing him Brahma asked: 'What is the matter? You appear dejected. Yama, the lord of death, is supposed to create fear and dejection in others. What great worry has made you, Yama himself, dejected?'

Yama said in a worried tone: 'You are well aware that I drag to hell those who commit heinous crimes on earth and torture them there. I am sincerely carrying out this duty entrusted to me for a long time. However, things have changed now. For the past several months, I am out of work. And so, hell has also become deserted and dilapidated. No one comes there. Hence, my servants are also without any work. Where did the sinners go? Shouldn't we give them the punishment they deserve? Is it right on our part to not do our duties? What happens to the sinners is a puzzle to me. I am worn-out because of these worries.'

Brahma could not understand anything. He was surprised to hear that sinners did not go anymore to Yama's abode. If that was true, what was happening to them? He went to earth to find out for himself. He noticed carefully the activities in the king's palace. The king gave death sentence to heinous criminals. Soldiers took these criminals to the execution site. Brahma saw a young man, the *jivanmukta*, killing these criminals with a sword. However, the *jivanmukta* executed the criminals in a novel manner.

He had kept two big pictures at the execution site. They were of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Both pictures were exceedingly beautiful and had a divine aura to them. Sweet fragrance was coming out of the flower garlands put on these pictures. Oil lamps had been lighted just as in

temples. The execution site was full of their fragrance. Below the two pictures were kept palm-leaf manuscripts of the Hindu scriptures and lives of great saints. Effectually, the execution site appeared more like a temple and had a divine and holy ambience. Brahma noticed all this.

The *jivanmukta* took all the criminals before the two pictures. Their minds got immersed in the thought of God. In that state, the young *jivanmukta* cut their necks with his sword from behind. The criminals were killed with their minds completely engrossed in God; completely oblivious to the fact that their heads were about to roll on the ground in a few moments. Brahma was surprised to see all this. He appeared before the *jivanmukta* and asked: 'Why are you executing the criminals in a completely unprecedented manner, seen nowhere in the world?'

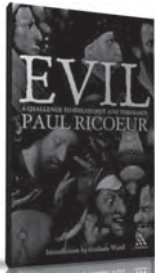
In reply, the *jivanmukta* recounted the circumstances of his death in his previous birth. He said: 'While dying I heard the words 'drummers' village' and hence was born in a drummers' village. The thought at the moment of dying became the cause of my next birth. Further, Lord Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita: "At the time of death, anyone who departs by giving up the body while thinking of me alone, he attains my state. There is no doubt about this" (8.5). Therefore, if the criminals who come here die thinking of God, they will attain God. It is with this intention that I have made suitable arrangements for these criminals to think of God while dying.'

Brahma was overjoyed to hear these words. The goal of every life is to become one with God. However it is not easy to attain God, crossing the transmigratory cycle of births and deaths. However, the *jivanmukta*, who was entrusted with the task of executing criminals, made it very easy for them to attain God. So, Brahma blessed the *jivanmukta* to his heart's content and returned to his abode.



REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Evil: A Challenge to Philosophy and Theology

Paul Ricoeur

Bloomsbury Academic, 50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK.
www.bloomsbury.com. 2007. 80 pp.
£16.99 PB. ISBN 9780826494764.

Pierre Gisel's *Preface* (21–30) to Ricoeur's book is dull, unoriginal, and redundant. On the other hand, Graham Ward's *Introduction* (3–18) is illuminating:

When Ricoeur enters the theological worldview ... he encounters world of myths and metaphors ... [and Ricoeur] challenges ... theological imagination ... Evil is the excess, the disproportion, within being human that being human cannot fathom ... Just when it seems that all things can be brought together in a grand synthesis, each belonging reciprocally to the other, the question of evil arises like a dark apocalyptic angel disturbing the waters. The angel commands that Ricoeur think again, which perhaps accounts for the exploratory and essayistic character of his writing (10–1).

Ward's is a necessary introduction.

Ricoeur understood the need for understanding myths, as distinct from religions, if we were to begin understanding evil. Here is Ricoeur in his own words:

Myth is certainly the first major transition [in studying evil or theodicy] ... In saying that the world had a beginning, myth relates how the human condition was brought about in its universally wretched form ... The comparative history of religions and cultural anthropology put in place typologies which distribute mythical explanations between monism, dualism, mixed solutions and so on, in order to master this infinite variety. The abstract character of these taxonomies ... must not mask the ambiguities

and paradoxes, often shrewdly calculated, that are cultivated by most myths at the precise moment of explaining the origin of evil. ... These abstract classifications must not mask the great oscillations within the mythical realm itself, between representation bordering down below on legendary narrative and folklore and up above on metaphysical speculation, of the kind that we can see in the great treatises of Hindu thought. Nevertheless, it is through its aspect as folklore that myth contemplates the demonic side of the experience of evil, articulating it in a language' (39–41).

This quotation makes explicit Ricoeur's concern with Hinduism—he speaks both of *monism* and of *the great treatises of Hindu thought*. Therefore, both Ward and Gisel do injustice to Ricoeur by not mentioning even once Ricoeur's acquaintance with Hindu thought. Further, Ricoeur's mention of Hinduism as a religion distinct from other religions calls the bluff of people who continue to write books which make the point that there is no such thing as Hinduism, nor is there anything distinct about the *Sanatana Dharma*. Hinduism is very much a religion, not a mish-mash of myths.

Ricoeur appreciates Immanuel Kant's understanding of evil as inscrutable or *unerforschbar* (53) since one should approach the problem of evil 'with the sobriety of a thought which is always careful not to transgress the limits of knowledge and to preserve the distance between thinking and knowing by object' (53–4). Ricoeur is distinctly Christian when he speaks at length on 'the demonic depth of human freedom' (53). This preoccupation with free will is a recurrent motif within Western philosophy; it began with the Greeks and later was absorbed into the Epistles that St Paul wrote to different nascent Christian Churches. In short, Ricoeur's understanding of evil is not so much mediated by 'Kant, Hegel, Dilthey ... Blondel, Marcel, Bloch and Braudel' (4) as Graham Ward thinks but

is more Pauline than Augustinian. The Pauline nature of Ricoeur's theology and theodicy is evident from the last part of his book. He speaks of the pastoral aspect of suffering and the consequences of evil: 'The failure of the theory of retribution at a speculative level must be integrated into the work of mourning as a deliverance from the accusation which in some way exposes suffering as undeserved. [Ricoeur goes on to refer to rabbi Harold S Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, (New York: Schocken, 1981)] ... A second stage of the spiritualization of lament is to allow oneself outbursts of complaint directed at God' (69).

Ricoeur's thrust is toward the lived experience of being amidst evil and surviving evil; thus his theodicy is very much Pauline.

Neither Ward, nor Gisel mention the influence that Jürgen Moltmann had on Ricoeur. When Moltmann experienced Nazi genocide; he wrote how God suffered with the victims of Hitler's annihilating rage. Ricoeur's 'accusation against "God" is the impatience of hope' (70), which as Ricoeur points out has its origins in the *Psalms* of the Bible (ibid.). True theologian that he was, Ricoeur's ending shows his understanding of human nature, of God, of Buddhism and of evil: since 'once violence has been suppressed, the enigma of true suffering, of irreducible suffering, will be laid bare' (72).

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**The Quintessence of
True Being**
Nome

Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT),
1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA
95060, USA. www.satramana.org. 2011.
59 pp. \$4.95 PB. ISBN 9780981940946.

In this slim volume, Nome explains the question: 'If the universe is unreal, why is it experienced as if real?' (27). It is the natural corollary to the central tenet of Advaita Vedanta that Brahman alone is real. Nome situates the 'timeless Knowledge' (3) of Advaita Vedanta within the continuum of the Upanishads, Acharya Shankara, the *Ribhu Gita*, and so on. Nome explains the question: 'It may be

wondered, if all are one Self, or Brahman, why are their experiences different and why, when one jiva is liberated from illusion and realizes Brahman, this is not the experience of all of them?' (47).

The Realization of Brahman, the true Self, is liberation from the individual, and need not be considered as a new or different state for or of the individual. The nature of such Liberation, or Realization, being eternal, is ever-existent. ... As it is ever-existent, the ideas of loss or attainment of it are inapplicable. (48)

There is nothing other than Brahman. Advaita Vedanta forces us to review epistemology and we will apply it to translation studies and hermeneutics.

Translation requires at least three loci: the translator, the original text, and the target language creation. There is an implied multiplicity involved in the *act* of translation. But if we are to apply Advaita Vedanta to the *act* of translation then we have to rethink this field. Who translates whom or what and into what culture/jiva-aggregate? The differences between languages, linguistic communities, or cultural milieus are illusory to the extent that there are no differences between the translator, the text to be translated, and the text to be created.

The *telos* of philosophical hermeneutics is to find multiplicity within monads, texts, or structures. This is the opposite of what Advaita Vedanta stands for. Advaita Vedanta sees unity within the apparent multiplicity of jivas, objects qua texts. This is because: Any supposed aspect of the jiva [the scholar of hermeneutics, the object or text which is being scrutinised] that bears even the least distinction from Brahman is unreal, for there cannot be another existence apart from the One Existence, regardless of whether such is imagined to be inside, outside, or alongside the One without a second' (37). Thus, Advaita Vedanta demands a rethinking of the entire domain of philosophical hermeneutics. As Nome repeatedly points out, there is no second other than Brahman. Therefore, within Advaita Vedanta, there is no temporal dimension. Nome's books including this one can be used by scholars unacquainted with Advaita Vedanta not only for understanding this philosophy but to review their own stances about other academic disciplines.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

MANANA

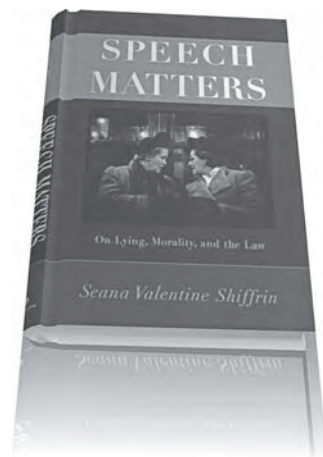
**Exploring thought-currents from around the world.
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Speech Matters:

On Lying, Morality, and the Law

Seana Valentine Shffrin

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. 2014. xi + 234 pp. \$ 35. HB. ISBN 9780691157023.



WE CAN NOT DEVELOP or flourish in isolation. Our mutual interdependence is not merely material but also, importantly, mental. The exchange of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, perceptions, and ideas with others is essential to each person's ability to function well as a thinker and as a moral agent. Sincere communication with others is, likewise, crucial to our ability to live together and to pursue our joint moral aims. Because we cannot peer into one another's minds, we depend upon others to convey their mental contents with precision and rich content through sincere communication. Sincere communication permits us, then, to share knowledge and hypotheses and to share needs, emotions, intentions, convictions, ambitions, desires, fantasies, disappointments, and judgements. Thereby, we are enabled to form and execute complex cooperative plans, to understand one another, to appreciate and negotiate around our differences, and to gauge, somewhat, the extent of our mutual ineffability. These achievements are important components of fulfilling the full range of our moral duties and ends, which involve mutual recognition, helping and respecting others, and responding to others as individuals—activities that often involve assessments of what others think, believe, and will.

Protecting this channel of mutual access must, therefore, be a substantial moral priority. My contention is that keener attention to the moral significance of communication would illuminate both the justificatory foundations of the prohibition against lying and the moral and legal prohibition against curtailing freedom of speech. Both prohibitions serve as moral protections of the reliability of communication and thereby preserve the conditions for moral agency, moral connection, and moral progress.

By probing the connections between discursive communication and moral agency, I hope to unify a variety of issues about communicative ethics and to motivate the outlines of a principled, nonconsequentialist approach to these issues—in particular to issues about lying, promissory fidelity, and freedom of speech. The approach I develop here complicates the case for making consequence-based exceptions to communicative duties in exigent circumstances created by bad agents. I argue that a nonconsequentialist case for sincerity and promissory fidelity has strong application outside of ideal theory, even in circumstances where immoral agents refuse to behave reciprocally and where insincerity and promissory infidelity are entertained because they would serve substantial moral purposes.

My aim is to provide a richer set of resources for deontological approaches to communicative duties and freedoms, by elaborating on the values communicative duties are structured to serve and by illustrating the connections between our communicative capacities and the cooperative project of developing and exercising our moral agency. Fleshing out these resources should clarify why making exceptions to communicative duties in exigent circumstances is not a simple ethical matter, and why yielding to consequences is in tension with the values these duties protect.

In short form, my claims revolve around the following ideas: Moral agency is a cooperative matter that depends on reliable channels of communication (among, of course, other things) for its development and realization. Every person matters, even those who go astray. In particular every person's moral agency matters, even when they behave criminally. To preserve meaningful opportunities for the proper realization of our moral agency, we must protect the freedom to communicate. We must also protect the reliability and trustworthiness of communication as a window into one another's minds. The duties of sincerity and promissory fidelity play a large role in that scheme of protection. To abridge freedom of speech or to carve exceptions to these duties is, to a significant extent, to isolate thinkers from one another. This isolation is in tension with the cooperative and collaborative project of fostering everyone's moral agency. The arguments for restricting the scope of communicative duties and rights often seem insufficiently sensitive to the general role of communication in enabling moral agency, securing our moral ends, and facilitating moral connection and moral rehabilitation, even with, and perhaps especially with, wrongdoers. Being able to forge moral progress together without resorting to violence depends upon enabling and protecting somewhat fragile lines of communicative trust.

My more detailed plan to elaborate on these ideas is as follows. First, I will address some issues about our individual duties of sincerity and promissory fidelity. I will defend a qualified absolutism about lying that distinguishes the wrong of the lie from the wrong involved in deception (when it is wrong). My account emphasizes the role the stricture on lying plays in maintaining reliable channels of communication between moral agents. Then, I will investigate whether, how, and why it should matter that one's interlocutor is a moral criminal, the infamous Murderer at the Door.

The second chapter turns to the question of whether promises made under duress have moral force. Extending themes from the first chapter about the importance of maintaining reliable channels of communication and trust, I consider whether and why it should matter that one's promisee is a moral criminal, the proverbial highway robber. I will defend the surprising conclusion that some promises made under duress may indeed have moral force. Both chapters connect sincerity and promissory fidelity by individuals in nonideal circumstances with the social conditions that enable moral progress.

From there, I turn my attention to law and social institutions. In the second part of the book, I address the foundational connection between the grounds for the moral prohibition on lying and the moral and political protection of freedom of speech. Connecting the foundations of the duty of sincerity with the foundations of freedom of speech yields implications for free speech doctrine and for our legal treatment of lies. Making this connection also has critical implications for exceptionalist arguments advanced on behalf of institutions like the police, public employers, and universities, for institutional exemptions from the prohibition on lies and from free speech requirements.



REPORTS

New Mission Centre

A new branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been started at Gurap in West Bengal. The address of the centre is 'Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Vill. and PO: Gurap, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal 712303', phone: 03213-232400, email: <gurap@rkmm.org>, and website: <www.rkmgurap.org>.

National Youth Day Celebrations

The National Youth Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and in an impressive way by many of our centres. **Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi** conducted a written quiz competition for school children in which 85,000 children took part. **Ramakrishna Math, Madurai** held an essay-writing competition in which 16,800 students from 133 educational institutions in Tamil Nadu participated. Sri V Shanmuganathan, Governor of Meghalaya and Manipur, took part in the special programme held on 12 January 2016. **Ramakrishna Math, Nagpur** conducted cultural competitions for students in which 11,696 students from nearly 150 schools in and around Nagpur took part. **Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot** held cultural competitions for students in which 4,800 students from 150 schools and colleges participated. **Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Memorial, Vadodara** held a written quiz competition in which 1,01,406 students from 1119 schools in Gujarat took part. **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Visakhapatnam** conducted a youth convention at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, on 12 January which was addressed among others by Sri Chandrababu Naidu, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, and attended by about 3,000 youths. The following centres and



Opening of new branch centre at Gurap

the Headquarters (along with Saradapitha) celebrated the Day with various programmes such as processions, speeches and cultural competitions: Agartala, Allahabad, Antpur, Asansol, Aurangabad, Baghbazar, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chapra, Chengalpattu, Chennai Math (along with Chennai Students' Home), Chennai Mission Ashrama, Coimbatore Math, Coimbatore Mission, Contai, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Dehradun, Deoghar, Gadadhar Ashrama, Garbeta, Ghatshila, Guwahati, Halasuru, Hatamuniguda, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jalpaiguri, Jammu, Jamshedpur, Jamtara, Kadapa, Kamarpukur, Kankurgachhi, Kanpur, Karimganj, Katihar, Limbdi, Malliankaranai, Manasadwip, Mangaluru, Medinipur, Mekhliganj, Mumbai, Mysuru, Naora, Narainpur, Narendrapur, Narotam Nagar, Nattarampalli, Patna, Ponnampet, Porbandar, Port Blair, Puri Math, Puri Mission, Purulia (along with Bagda Math), Rahara, Rajahmundry, Ramharipur, Ranchi Morabadi, Ranchi Sanatorium, Salem, Sargachhi, Seva Pratishthan, Shillong, Sikra-Kulingram, Silchar, Swamiji's Ancestral House, Tamluk, Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, Tirupati, and Vijayawada.

Celebration of 150th Birth Anniversaries: Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj

Nagpur Math held a youth convention on 2 January in which 550 youths took part, and special lectures on 2 and 3 January which were attended by about 300 devotees.

Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj
Swamiji's Ancestral House held a special

lecture on 14 December which was attended by 650 persons, and a devotees' convention on 14 and 15 January which was attended altogether by 800 people. **Baghbazar Math** conducted a day-long programme comprising special worship, homa, discourses, music recitals, and a play on 15 January.

Sister Nivedita

Barasat Math held a youth convention on 10 January in which 310 youths took part. **Kamar-pukur** centre conducted conventions for youths, volunteers, and devotees on 21, 22, and 23 January respectively. They were attended altogether by 2,650 people. **Swamiji's Ancestral House** held three special lectures on 9, 28, and 30 December which were attended altogether by 1,250 people. A play on Sister Nivedita was staged on 29 December which was watched by 450 people.


Swachchha Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign)

The following centres cleaned public places and streets in their respective areas and spread awareness among people about cleanliness: **Kamar-pukur** centre undertook the cleaning of a few streets in its vicinity and a playground on 31 December and 26 January. About 300 people, including members of local associations and government officers, joined hands with the centre in the cleaning programmes. **Mangaluru** centre launched 'Swachchha Mangaluru', a cleanliness drive on 1 February 2015. So far, the centre has conducted 38 cleaning programmes, including 5 in January 2016. About 12,000 youths and school children took part in these programmes, in which, apart from cleaning roads and other places, some minor civil works at public places were also undertaken. At **Nagpur Math**, Swami Gautamanandaji, Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, inaugurated a year-long city cleanliness drive on

18 January and felicitated 30 sweepers. **Rajahmundry** centre held a cleaning programme on 12 January in which about 400 people comprising mainly college students cleaned the open ground of Government Arts College, Rajahmundry.

Relief

Winter Relief · (i) The following centres distributed blankets to poor people: **India: Aalo:** 500 on 10 and 17 January; **Asansol:** 330 from 10 to 22 January; **Baghbazar:** 1,621 from 20 December to 26 January; **Baranagar Mission:** 300 from 8 September to 8 January; **Chandigarh:** 350 from 22 November to 28 December; **Cooch Behar:** 300 on 31 January; **Delhi:** 783 from 14 December to 27 January; **Gadadhar Ashrama:** 50 on 5 January; **Gourhati:** 300 on 20 December; **Guwahati:** 503 from 24 December to 31 January; **Ichapur:** 540 from 12 October to 26 November; **Imphal:** 1,920 on 8 January and 11 February; **Jamshedpur:** 352 from 13 October to 24 January; **Kailashahar:** 100 on 27 and 28 November; **Kankurgachhi:** 352 on 9 and 11 January; **Medinipur:** 600 from 10 October to 30 January; **Muzaffarpur:** 300 on 24 January; **Ootacamund:** 250 from 24 June to 10 February; **Purulia:** 300 from 21 November to 10 January; **Rahara:** 101 from 2 to 16 January; **Sargachhi:** 515 from 25 November to 17 December; **Sarisha:** 740 from 12 October to 21 December; **Varanasi Sevashrama:** 223 from 19 December to 31 January; **Vrindaban:** 500 from 2 to 12 January; **Bangladesh: Mymensingh:** 800 in January and February; **Total:** 12,630. (ii) **Varanasi Sevashrama** distributed 225 quilts to the needy from 10 January to 20 February. (iii) The following centres distributed various winter garments, mentioned against their names, to needy people: (a) **Bhopal:** 802 sweatshirts from 14 to 16 February. (b) **Chandigarh:** 584 sweatshirts from 1 to 25 February. (c) **Limdbdi:** 587 sweaters from 10 to 24 February. (d) **Rahara:** 20 sweaters from 2 to 16 January. (e) **Sarisha:** 100 jackets from 12 October to 21 December.

Flood Relief · **Fiji:** Fiji centre treated 96 patients affected by the devastating cyclone Winston that had struck Fiji on 20 February. 

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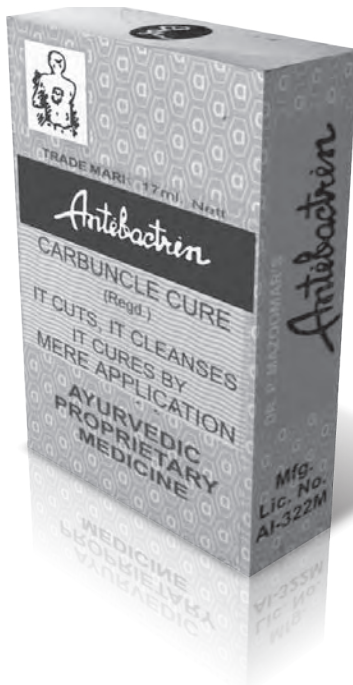


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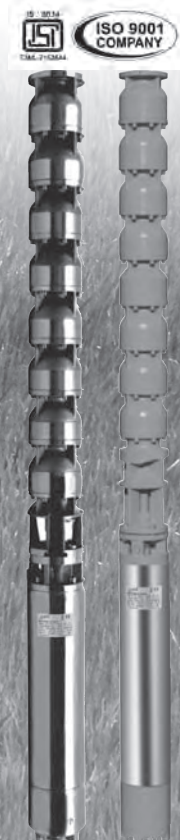
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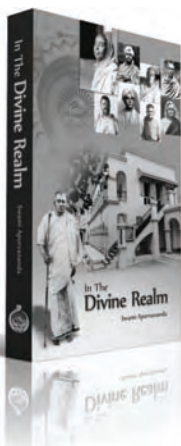
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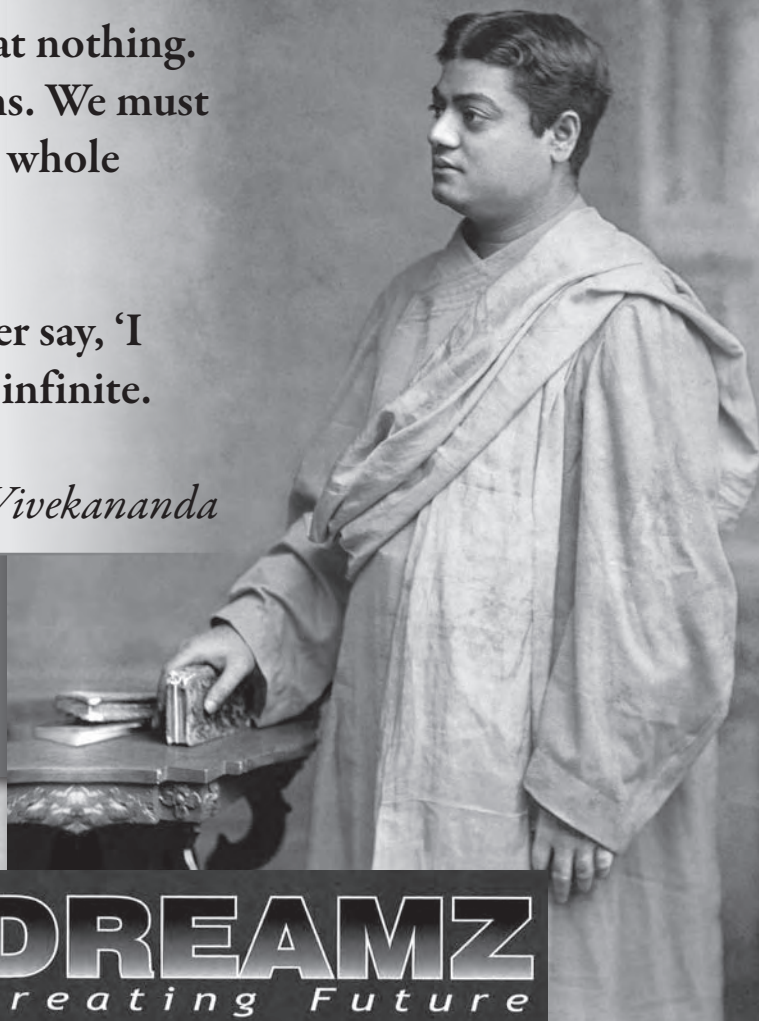
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